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MY CUP
RUNNETH
OVER.

600088348.

"MY CUP RUNNETH OVER;"

OR,

THE GRACIOUS RAIN.

"MY CUP RUNNETH OVER;"

OR,

The Gracious Rain.

IN EIGHTEEN LETTERS.

BY

LILIA AMES,

AUTHOR OF "THE WELSH VALLEY."

"Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?"

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., BERNERS STREET.

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TO ALL WHO ARE IN SEARCH OF TRUE HAPPINESS.

WHO ARE WEARY OF BUILDING ON THE SAND,

AND LEANING FOR SUPPORT ON THE REED

OF WORLDLY PLEASURE;

THE FOLLOWING LETTERS

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

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LETTER I.

Sought Out.

"I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick."—Jer. xxxiv. 16.

My Dear Friend,

You say in your letter received yesterday—"In the midst of my deep dejection I long for you—I cling to you; but, as I well know that we cannot be together, I earnestly request that you will write me a series of letters, giving me an account of God's dealings with you, as I know full well how much you have gone through, and yet you seem so placid—I might almost say, *happy*—from your style of writing. Would that "I could learn your secret, for I am sorely disturbed, and I feel fretful."

I quote all this passage from your own writing, my dear friend, in order that, if ever you think my letters selfish, you may see, by reading the above, that you wished for my *inner* history. Feeling, as I do, grieved at your downcast state,

I am most anxious to pour balm into the wounds which trouble your tender spirit; and I think it will in some degree soothe you, to recount my heavenly Father's kindness in all his dealings with me.

It is pleasant and profitable to remember and ponder over the graciousness of the great Shepherd in seeking us out and arresting us in our thoughtless and downward career. I delight in considering this wonderful act of love. I was wandering hither and thither, without one thought of my Saviour, or if I did think of Him, it was as a hindrance to the full enjoyment of what I was blind enough to consider my liberty. His boundless compassion yearned over me, His eye noted my vain struggles after false peace, and He followed me into the wilderness, where I was striving to reach the pleasant waters which continually eluded my pursuit. I was seeking a Paradise, but it proved the *mirage* of the desert; and though I toiled constantly for enjoyment, continued disappointment might have opened my eyes to the fruitlessness of the pursuit, if Satan had not industriously concealed from me "the *things which belonged* to my peace." Who but

that Saviour, who shed His precious blood for me, could understand the misery and danger of my state? *I* knew it not. I was not happy; but I never once thought of turning to Him who is the source of all joy. Flattered, envied, and admired, I was, in the world's estimation, rich; but, in the sight of God, I was dark, poor, naked, and miserable. A thick, impenetrable cloud hid from my eyes the realms of peace, light, and blessedness, which it is the glorious privilege of the Christian to view by faith.

How often has my eye been languid and my smile forced when I wished most to shine, and I had no one to take my hand and tell me in love and pity that I was spending my strength in vain in the service of a world which must one day leave me, and turning my back on all that is exalted and happy. But blessed be God, I was not dependent on a fellow-mortal for help; the eye of Omniscience and Omnipotence was upon me, and a *friend indeed* waited to shew me mercy. It is inexpressibly pleasant to me to retrace the steps by which my heavenly Father led me to himself. The cords by which He drew me were indeed "cords of love."

It was a bright and lovely month of May, when I cheerfully left all the gaieties of London, to visit my cousin, Mrs ——. When I drove from my door, how little did I think of the important event which was to take place before I again saw the city of my birth! But although I was so unconscious, angels rejoiced, and Christ himself was near, directing my path. Weeks passed on, and I was alone with my invalid cousin, in the deep seclusion of a beautiful country residence, and, as her time was much occupied, I was often left to myself for hours.

It is very sweet to reflect that God himself did all the work of my conversion. Not a human creature had ever been much interested in my spiritual welfare; no good minister was at hand to exhort and arouse me, but the Holy Spirit dealt with me in infinite wisdom and love. None knew so well as the great Physician of souls what exactly suited my peculiar case. My nature is highly sensitive, and my feelings quick; and with great tenderness has He tempered the wind to the shorn lamb. Truly on me His doctrine has dropped as the rain, His speech has dis-

tilled as the dew, "as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." Yes, dear friend, I was on the threshold of that great change from darkness to light, from death to life, to which the ever blessed Spirit of God was introducing me. Let us pause here to wonder and adore.

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

Books.

" Happiness, thou lovely name!
Where's thy seat? O tell me where?
Learning, pleasure, wealth, and fame
All cry out, 'It is not here.'"

TOPLADY.

My Dear Friend,

I am thankful to my heavenly Father to find that you have been interested and aroused by my last letter, and with sincere pleasure I resume my narrative. One morning, listless and unthinking, I sauntered into my cousin's drawing-room, and took up a book to occupy the time, until I should be summoned to breakfast. That book had been placed in my way by the great Ruler of all events, even the smallest. It had been presented to my cousin by a Christian friend, but never opened since it entered the house.

When I laid my hand on that book, when I opened its pages,—oh! what mighty consequences were about to follow! Heaven—a Saviour—Divine love—hope—purity—wisdom—were shortly to be revealed to my soul, and, no

doubt, there was "joy in heaven" over a sinner on the threshold of repentance.

When I found that the book was of a serious cast, I was tempted to put it aside; it must, I thought, be a gloomy, uninteresting work; and I looked around for some lighter production, more congenial to my taste. But finding none such, I sat down to examine the religious book, though it was but a careless examination. I continued turning over the leaves for some time, and the precious seed of Divine grace was then dropped into my heart, to struggle through adverse circumstances, storms, and sunshine, sometimes apparently withered and lost, but taking root downwards, and, eventually, to bear fruit unto everlasting life.

At length I closed the book with a resolution to read no more of it. A feeling of uneasiness had taken hold of my bosom, which I tried to shake off.

Oh! marvellous blindness of human nature! I *loved* darkness and shunned light, and the gracious pleadings of the Spirit were disliked and resisted.

A few days after this, I drove with my cousin

to the town of ——, and brought out with me a book from the circulating library, which, being a tale of fiction, I imagined would give a turn to my thoughts.

And here again the great Physician, who had taken my case in hand, skilfully interposed. The tale turned out to be of a religious character, and represented a thoughtless, beautiful, and fashionable young married woman gradually led over to Christ's side. The story was highly interesting, therefore I read it attentively; but a new source of uneasiness was instilled into my inmost heart. I found that a life of amusement and frivolity was *not* compatible with a Christian profession, and that I must either walk contrary to God, or give up many of my former cherished pursuits for His holy work and will. The summer was brilliantly fine; I made constant pleasant excursions with my cousin friends; I tried, by many occupations, to drive away the new and most unwelcome thoughts which haunted me, but in vain. My heavenly Father, Saviour, Friend, encircled me with the bands of His wise restraints, and I was never again to escape from this gentle enthralment. And now, my dear friend, let us

pause for a time to reflect upon the love of God to a soul. Think of the forbearance with which He had treated me during so many years of wandering and utter neglect of Himself. Think of the patience with which He had waited until the appointed moment when the Spirit was to break this heart of stone. Think of the kind, as well as skilful, method He pursued with me,—bringing me into retirement,—placing those books in my hands,—watching over His own work day and night, with far more tenderness than could be evinced by the most anxious earthly parent. And all this between Himself and my own soul. This seems to me a very sweet reflection,—that no mortal interfered between me and my Maker, between that Divine Being who loved me and gave Himself for me, and my poor, weak heart.

Do not such thoughts comfort you? Can you believe that such love will ever fail you? Will you persevere in supposing that He, who has also done so much for *you*, and so tenderly, can *now* forget *you?* No; "Sooner can a mother forget her sucking child." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His care for the sheep He has sought *out—His own* dearly-purchased possession, pur-

chased with His own precious blood—can never pass away until you are safe with Him in everlasting joy and glory.

Oh! dear friend, lay these things to heart, and your gloom must give way! May the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and give you joy and peace in believing!

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

The Invitation.

"How sweet to the soul are the breathings of peace,
When the still voice of pardon bids sorrow to cease;
When the welcome of mercy falls soft on the ear,
Come hither, ye laden—ye weary, draw near."

M'Comb.

Dear Friend,

In my last letter I described the state in which I was left by reading two books. Restless —discontented with myself—afraid to probe my feelings—afraid of again opening any work on religious subjects, thinking that in them I should find nothing but railings against gaiety and pleasure—I was careful to lock up my thoughts in my own heart; and although I was not happy, I saw no remedy for this state of things, and no sun shone on my darkness. But my heavenly Guardian was near me, and His infinite compassion was about to open that door which leads to everlasting life.

Summer passed away, a fine autumn succeeded, and a bracing dry winter closed the year.

One evening my cousin was suffering from a severe headache, and I accompanied her after tea

into her bedroom, and, as she lay on a couch, bathed her temples with *eau-de-cologne* till she fell into a quiet sleep. I then seated myself noiselessly by the fire, and gave way to some very gloomy reflections and erroneous views of God's character. There was no light in the room, excepting that which a cheerful fire threw around; all was profoundly still, and I was alone with my God. But the eye of infinite Love was upon me. My poor, wayward, weak heart was open to its searching power, and the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, encircled me, and led me to the spring in the desert,—the feast for the perishing wanderer,—the cordial for the sick heart,—the shield against despair,—the precious legacy of a crucified Saviour,—the Testament of His love. Oh! my friend, this was a great event in my life! Hundreds of times had I read and heard that Bible; from my earliest years I had been taught its truths; but all its touching invitations had been in vain until that memorable evening, when the Holy Spirit applied it to my heart.

I had taken up a Bible, to see—for the first time in my life—if it contained any real comfort; *and turning over its* leaves by the firelight, half

sulkily, my eye was arrested by these words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. xi. My heart warms with love to God when I dwell upon these eventful moments —moments in which the stony heart broke, the gates of brass gave way,—and joy, surprise, overwhelming gratitude, forced tears from my eyes; and the blessed Saviour, who had suffered so much, and died on the Cross for me, doubtless beheld of the "travail of His soul" with divine complacency.

Oh! the wisdom, the love, the gentleness of these dealings with my soul!

That quiet room,—that accepted penitent,—that open Bible,—that all-seeing eye,—those sheltering wings—are with me subjects for endless, happy meditation.

How sweet were those moments, my friend, and how little could I then suppose that I should ever lose the sense of that Presence, or the comfort of that Love.

The peace and joy of my heart seemed a never-ending treasure, too precious to be spoken of, and I kept my new and happy feelings locked within my own heart. The 14th, 15th, and 17th chapters of St John's gospel were next dwelt on, with delight amounting to ecstacy, and I fancied myself a perfect Christian, capable of any sacrifice for that Saviour who had done so much for me.

Oh! the human heart—the poor, weak, treacherous human heart!

No doubt *at that time* I was *converted*, but years and years of refining away the dross were to follow.

As yet I had no just views of the atonement. I loved my Saviour for His gracious words, but I did not know Him fully as a Redeemer. I did not yet know the plague of my own heart, and I prayed to Christ as a benefactor, but I had not found Him as a propitiation, because I knew not my need of such. I had deep waters of trial to pass through before I pillowed my head at the foot of the cross.

That very winter I went to Paris on a visit to some fashionable friend, and, in an atmosphere of the most thorough worldliness, I received the infection, and my lately treasured feelings were cast

aside. Years passed away, and the precious seed seemed choked and lost amidst the cares and amusements of the world. But never did that blessed Spirit who had planted it in my heart lose sight of it for one moment; the tender germs were kept alive.

A beautiful exotic removed from the greenhouse and planted in the open ground too early in spring, is often withered by the east wind, scorched by the sun, and injured by cold, heavy rains, until at length its promising young leaves drop off, and it dies down to the ground and disappears. But its root has not perished; and when the soft showers and genial summer weather come to nourish, and call it forth, the gardener is gratified by seeing its tender shoots again appearing, and giving promise of beauty and perfume. So was it with the plant of grace in my soul. It never died, though to all appearance extinct.

Sometimes I had seasons when my heart felt warm. Then I loved the Scripture promises, I liked to read good books, I learnt hymns, and admired descriptions of moral beauty, and I prayed to God, but *not* through a Mediator; there-

fore I received little benefit, and made scarcely any progress in my Christian course. And yet, even then, many a time did the "holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity" pardon my "ignorance in asking," and grant my petitions in infinite compassion.

But I knew not my own heart; I had scarcely glanced into its recesses; I was far from that renewed, filial state of mind when the humble, obedient child of God can say: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," Psa. cxxxix. That is the happy privilege of the advanced Christian,—to lay bare his poor, weak, but honest heart to the all-searching eye of God, and invite Him to purify it.

However, amidst all that befel me, Jesus kept a firm hold of the poor sheep, bore it in His everlasting arms, and, I believe, will carry it safely through time to eternity.

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

The Mountain Inn.

"Peace, such as earth has none to give,
The peace of sin forgiven;
Of hopes exalted from the world,
And bliss secured in heaven."

HYMN.

My Dear Friend,

It makes me happy and thankful to find that the retrospect of God's dealings with my soul has interested and been of use to you; and now I approach a period on which I always love to dwell.

Years had elapsed since the last events of which I wrote, and my heavenly Guardian had united me to one who was a help, instead of a hindrance, to me in my heavenward path.

One lovely summer, accompanied by my husband, I travelled through the most beautiful scenery in Wales. After wandering through a great variety of fine country we arrived in a little valley, peacefully embosomed in mountains, where we resolved to remain for some weeks, and thought we should never tire of walking and driving through its romantic windings.

For some time this excitement remained unabated, and my enthusiastic feelings were in high and constant delight; but a sudden change in the weather occurred, and my ecstacy began to flag. Day after day there poured down such rain as I had never seen before, and we were almost entirely confined to the inn parlour. I had not yet learned to look within myself—and the kingdom of God is within us; I knew not yet the only enduring peace, neither had I clasped the Cross. *Out of Christ* there is no peace.

If I, who already knew something of heavenly things, and was desirous of knowing more, felt a void, a sadness of spirit, under the slightest external discouragement, what must not those feel who seek their *all* in earthly enjoyment, when that enjoyment flags? Surely our hearts should pity them, and yearn to point out to them the way of peace, instead of shunning them, and turning our backs on them, because they are wandering sheep!

As I said, my spirits sank, and I was glad to seek a new scene.

It was a rainy, gloomy morning, when we left *the valley; and* after a tedious drive over rough

and stony roads, we arrived in the dusk of evening at a very lonely, neglected-looking inn. The scenery around was wild, barren, and most uninviting; a dark grandeur on all sides, but no woods or green meadows to relieve the eye. The house, large and ill kept, had no visitors but ourselves, and there was no sound except the pattering rain, and the rushing noise of a mountain stream, which passed close to what was denominated the garden. That evening I was in what is commonly called "low spirits," without any particular cause—a state of mind very rare, I should think, with the advanced Christian.

The next morning was so very wet and stormy that we were afraid we should be detained all day and night at this gloomy place; but a little break in the clouds towards mid-day induced us to order the carriage round, and I went up stairs to the large old-fashioned bedroom to prepare for my departure.

Many thoughts passed through my mind, and, amongst others, I wondered how it was that I was so different from Christians of whom I had read. They all enjoyed serenity of mind, and I was restless. Suddenly I threw myself upon my

knees, and, with fervent entreaty, asked God to make me His own obedient, loving child, for Christ's dear sake. It was the first time I had ever *felt* my *dependence* on that blessed Mediator, and that short petition was accepted and registered in heaven.

Oh ! my friend, my heart burns within me when I recal that hour ! The peace and joy that descended into my heart ! It was like a second conversion.

From that time, through storm and sunshine, I have seldom ceased to lean on my Saviour, and the fruits of that blessed union soon began to shew themselves in my life and conversation. Often have I sweetly meditated on that afternoon !

During a drive of more than twenty miles, the rain (which had set in again) never ceased falling, and a heavy mist almost concealed the grand scenery, but there was peace within, and everything seemed beautiful to my eyes. We descended a steep mountain, and entered, late in the evening, another of those sweet valleys so dear to tourists.

As you are aware, the little estate of —— was

to be sold at that time, and we bought it; and for months I was happy, both temporally and spiritually. Christ had become a *reality* to me, and I was longing to *do something* to prove my love to Him. But, as yet, my eyes were only partially opened to my own state of heart. That heavenly Physician, who well knew me, saw that I needed very great chastening, and He soon placed me in the furnace of affliction. Stroke after stroke fell upon me, until at length, the last and greatest, the utter prostration of my beloved partner's health, and total incapacity for all enjoyment, touched me in a point the most exquisitely painful, because it fell on one dearer to me than life; and when years rolled on, and I found this trial continued, my spirit fainted for a long season, and I often exclaimed in agony, "The Lord hath forgotten to be gracious." Yet *now* I feel that never did He cease to love me during this heavy chastening, and never was He nearer to His child than in that cloud!

I did not cease praying for the relief my soul desired, but it was the strong crying of nature after *earthly* blessings. I wanted my husband to be restored, and I pleaded, and wept, and implored

with the whole strength and fervour of enthusiastic affection; but it pleased infinite Wisdom and unbounded Love to refuse my wild and foolish prayers, and to end *all* hope by removing from me the object of all this strong conflict. My husband was taken from me. . . . .

But was my Saviour regardless of my anguish? Oh! no. My petition had long lain at His feet, His gracious eye beheld it with infinite compassion, and He would have fully granted it, if He could consistently with our real welfare. I had forgotten that we should always accompany our prayers for deliverance from earthly trouble with the desire to make *God's* will *our* will, thus ridding ourselves of much fruitless sorrow. For a long time I lay crushed and stunned; then I gave myself entirely up to grief; I hugged it to my breast as my only possession. I turned away from the Bible; I felt sullen towards God; I thought that, as my prayers had not been answered, (and *such* prayers—so vehement, so hot from the heart!) that prayer was not for *me*, and I only longed and yearned after my lost one.

In this state of mind I wandered out one day, *and found myself* on a hill-side path, beautiful

beyond the power of pen to describe, a walk we had often admired together.

I sat down on a soft bed of ferns and heather, and burying my face in my hands, I indulged in strong weeping; I did not care who heard me; I sobbed violently; I moaned aloud; I called on my lost love in the most piteous tones;—and when this agony passed, I sat quite still, whilst large tears rained down from my eyes, and fell unheeded on my dress. At length I exclaimed in a tone of despair: "What shall I do?—what *shall* I do?"

As I looked around, my eye was caught by some bright-coloured object near me, and listlessly I stretched out my hand and took it up. It had evidently been placed there purposely, by some good Christian, as there was a stone put on one end of it to prevent the wind blowing it away. It was of bright pink paper, and when I unfolded it, I found it filled with messages of love from Jesus.

Oh! how they did me good! They dropped fatness on my arid soul; they dropped upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the stream of peace, which I had first known at the Moun-

tain Inn, but which latterly had been locked up in hard frost, thawed, and trickled into my heart, to become gradually a broad river, which I trust will carry me into a happy immortality. I look back with warmest gratitude on all my past. How gently have I been dealt with; what comforts have been around me in my troubles; what cheering promises have refreshed me in extremity; what gradual purifying of my tried heart and warm affections; what drawing towards Christ; what clinging to the Cross; what humble laying of the heart at the footstool of Redeeming love!

With such comfortable thoughts, I leave you for the present.

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

Justified.

There if Thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh! with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God!

COWPER.

My Dear Friend,

Let us begin by thanking God for the abundant cause we have *now* to rejoice instead of mourning.

There was a time when God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, sermons, were all viewed by me with fear, if not aversion, because I knew that I could not stand the test of their searching truths. I was guilty before God, and instead of trying to clear myself from that guilt (though that were a fruitless attempt in my own strength), I shut my eyes against its existence and its penalty, as well as against Christ and happiness.

But now, thanks be to God, how altered is my position!

Let us view the most favoured child of this world—a being, like our mutual acquaintance

Mrs A——, surrounded with all that wealth and family affections can bestow; with beauty, talent, and influence; flattered, followed, and envied by a numerous train; but with no views beyond what this earth can bestow. All seems light and pleasant in her career; but there *are* or *will* be seasons when the truth, the dreaded truth, of another state of being will intrude,—an account to be rendered of time, talent, and health misspent and misused. The bed of sickness, the unoccupied hour, the sleepless night, *will* sometimes bring their thoughts, however repulsed, and then the world's votary must tremble like Felix. I contrast my present state with this sad picture. Although so weak and sinful in myself, yet how full of joy is the thought that I am justified before God. So far from dreading Him, the recollection of His omnipresence and omniscience is delightful and comfortable to my soul, and it would grieve me could I suppose that, even for an hour, His eye might be withdrawn from me. God is my "sun and shield."

Justified! It is a blissful thought! I can say, clasping the Cross and pointing to my Redeemer, "*I am guilty,* but behold my imputed righteous-

ness; I am weak, behold my strength; I am poor, naked, and unfruitful, behold my riches, my wedding garment, my complete salvation." Is it not sweet to think, that God, who "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," looks upon me, a creature born in sin, and stained with sin, as perfectly spotless and lovely, pure and holy, *in Christ?* Christ has done all for me; fulfilled all the law of God for me; died to atone for my transgression; washed my polluted soul in His precious blood, and is daily cleansing the stains which daily sins are leaving upon my heart. Is it not enough to console the most afflicted, poorest, most neglected of God's creatures, to contemplate themselves as in this blessed state?

"What, Lord," shall a poor, humble sinner say, "*all* blotted out! This great sin,—that great backsliding! I cannot bear to look back on it, and canst *Thou* forgive it, thou pure and holy Being!"

"Yes, poor sinner," is the gracious answer, "*all* is blotted out; no sin can surpass my atonement; the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin."

These, my dear friend, are the words of eternal truth; therefore, in the morning, at noon-day,

and at evening, let us rejoice in this sweet assurance, that in Christ we are justified, and stand sinless before the Father.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

Sanctification.

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. . . . . Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."—JOHN XVII.

My Dear Friend,

We last considered the blessed position in which we stand, as justified in the sight of a holy God, through the complete atonement and perfect righteousness of a glorified Redeemer. But if the adopted child of God delight in his justification, he delights no less in the after-work of sanctification. Oh! it is very sweet to look back on all that the Holy Spirit, the Purifier, has done for our souls! It is very true that, with me, the medicine has been bitter—the caustic has been severe. Many tears have followed the rod; many sighs have heaved my heart; many a throe has convulsed my poor heart; many a time has the furnace seemed as though it would consume me. But when I look upon the result, is it not worth all that I have suffered? If a slight correction would have sufficed, I feel

assured that He who loves me more than a mother loves her child, would not have made it heavy. I believe firmly that all this refining is needful to take away the dross from the fine gold, and that in a future state I and my *lost love* shall praise God together for every trial He laid upon me here. How gradually, how skilfully, has the great Physician proceeded in His operation! One chamber of the heart after another has been searched and purified; wound after wound, which sin had inflicted, has been laid open and cleansed to its healing. That blessed Sanctifier has taken away idol after idol from its throne, and rooted out weeds which seemed intertwined with the very existence of the heart. How has He hedged me in from temptation, and pruned the redundancies into which warm feelings were apt to run!

Many a fabric have I built which He has cast down, and I have wept over its ruins with impatient tears; but had not the wise Architect of our heavenly home removed my frail creation, it would have fallen and sorely wounded me. Many an idle dream has He dispersed, but He has given

me, in its place, the glorious reality of holiness here, and the strong hope of felicity hereafter.

What the world's devotee most dreads, God's omnipresence, is now my delight. There are now no secret recesses in my heart where I hoard up favourite sins, and think to hide them from my Maker. No; I love to lay bare, before His all-searching eye, my whole soul, in order that the light of divine trust may pervade and illumine its inmost chambers. "Thou, God, seest me," is a pleasant thought to my renewed feelings, and I love to bask in the sunshine of that paternal oversight. This work of sanctification, so glorious in the end, is long, trying, and severe. Temptations of every description, and assailing us through every faculty, is a fiery ordeal through which every child of God must pass; and herein do we see the gradual advance of sanctifying grace more perhaps than in any other process.

The inexperienced Christian sees the deadly foe advance with foolish confidence in his own strength. He curiously examines its proportions and parleys with it, until in an instant the toils are thrown over him, and he falls, to rue bitterly

his self-reliance, and to learn his utter helplessness *in himself.*

But as the work of sanctification advances, the Christian, taught by the Spirit, shuts his eyes against the temptation, turns from it, dreads his own weakness, shakes off the thought of parley, and flies to Christ for "the whole armour of God." And yet, even with the advanced believer, the fight is sometimes severe, and the foe gains advantages; but they are resolutely contested, and every fall is improved by the Almighty Father of his spirit to his ultimate benefit. Ah! my friend, this work of sanctification is a noble work! That education for eternity, carried on so silently, gradually, yet insensibly, in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil; that beautiful transformation from mental deformity to heavenly beauty; that dawning of light in the soul, which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" that *welling* out of the water of life, which flows gently on until it cleanses the whole heart, and produces fertility and rich fruit; that fixing of the eye on Christ until we are changed into His image; that rearing of a glorious edifice which is to last through

eternity. This is the work of sanctification, and this is going on in every heart which has been chosen and given to God. The careless sinner sees the companion of his downward course suddenly arrested in his career by some power incomprehensible and invisible. He sees his friend looking with terror and abhorrence on those sinful paths and pleasures which, but a month ago, he sought with avidity. Nay, more; he sees this singularly changed being pursuing objects exactly contrary to those he once loved so exclusively; turning his back upon former enjoyments, and, with all his energies, seeking a road which appears full of difficulties, and devoid of all attractions. The unawakened sinner cannot comprehend the moving spring—the powerful motive—*love of Christ;* he cannot understand either the earnest affection which exhorts *him* also to turn and live a new life; he shrinks from his former trusted companion, and affects to ridicule him; but such is the power of the *real work of sanctification*, so visible in the divine mark on God's ransomed ones, that the pretended scorner is, in his secret heart, afraid of the contact, and

feels his own littleness in comparison with t
growing nobility of the Christian character.

He cannot help seeing that the unclean h
become clean, and God is glorified even in t
eyes of the affected despiser; and should he ev
need a real friend or counsellor, he will be mc
likely to go to the very man, the sanctified believ
from whom he recoiled in the hour of carel
prosperity.

As this work of sanctification proceeds, t
subject of it finds the curse, under which hum
nature groans, changing into a blessing. Toil
sweetened by a sense of duty performed. Sic
ness is turned into a season of fruitful meditatio
and growing experience of our heavenly Fathe
love. Trials are changed into holy teache
shewing us our own deficiencies, and training
to patience, submission, and faith. Death itse
the most dreaded part of our penalty, ceases
be terrible, and is transformed into a friend ope
ing the gate which leads to endless happiness.

At the name of Jesus the knee of the verie
worldling *must* bow, unless he should have cast
all semblance of divine restraint; but the col
averted eye, too plainly tells the tale of slight

mercy, neglected love, and distasteful homage. In the sanctified believer how does the eye light up at that blessed name! That name which promises to save him from his sins, is sweeter in his ear than the most lovely earthly harmony; and his external obeisance is but a faint type of the bowing of heart, will, and affections, before that Maker, Saviour, and God. Under the influence of the Sanctifier, the gloomy brow and murmuring lips cease to dishonour God by their withering influence. No longer does the afflicted Christian weary his dearest friend by the constant recital of his grievances. The grievances may not have ceased, but they are carried to the throne of grace, and the humble complaint is spread out before that glorious Being who is the "Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." His cry is, "Remove Thy stroke away from me;" but he adds, "Thy will be done," and the sorrow of the world is exchanged for meek submission.

The proud, stubborn will, which is at once the boast and misery of the ungodly, is brought, by the sanctifying Spirit, humbly to place its neck under the easy yoke of Christ, and to desire fer-

vently that He will accept heart, hands, soul, body, and spirit, for His own service, and look upon His creature as a "living sacrifice."

The passionate retort which, hurled in reckless anger, inflicts a rankling wound where it falls, is changed into the "soft answer" which "turneth away wrath;" and the thirst for revenge, ever watching for an opportunity to injure its object, is turned into blessings and good offices. The renewed heart breathes the spirit of its divine Master's prayer for those who slew Him, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The idle tongue, which scattered around its careless words, regardless of the mischief they might cause, or the pain they might inflict, is, under the influence of grace, become a fountain of blessing,—"the lips of the righteous feed many;" and the poison which destroys is turned into nourishment for weak souls who are striving to reach heaven.

The wasteful, mischievous hands, which once squandered God's gifts in folly, or which hung idly down, are now employed for God. They work for His cause, they write for His glory, they

are sanctified and given up to do the will of their Maker, and His service is their willing *heart*, willing service.

The feet which walked in the way of destruction and misery, and which turned obstinately away from the path of life, have now found the narrow way which leads to Heaven, and in imitation of their divine Exemplar, they love to go about doing good. They have found the ways of religion ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace; and the bright prospect at the end is ever inviting them onwards in their Christian race.

Yes, my friends, it is a beautiful contemplation, that gradual polishing of the stone which is finally to be added to the glorious temple of Christ,—to see the shapeless mass, encrusted with the dross of fallen nature, growing into symmetry, and developing the fine beauty which fits it for the heavenly building. This is comfort, amidst all the painful process of our purifying, when we can compare our present state with that of years past, and acknowledge with humble gratitude the work of the Holy Spirit.

What a new view opens to the spiritual vision of all the relative duties, when the heart has

been graciously claimed by God? No longer do we exclaim, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Like our divine Master, we would do good to all men, had we the power. We compassionate their bodily sufferings, and endeavour, according to our ability, to ameliorate their temporal condition. But their *immortal part—there* lies our chief concern, especially in those who are bound to us by the ties of love and nature. The welfare of their souls forms the principal theme of our earnest prayers for them; and if we can but believe that they are accepted in Christ, we can resign them submissively to Him in death, though dear to us as our own existence, and we can contemplate them as gone "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."—1 Peter i.

The rule of life in the renewed heart is the word of God—the Holy Bible. Therein does the Christian study his duty, his walk, as industriously as the experienced commander studies the plan which delineates the field of expected contest. He only desires to *know* his Lord's will, he only wants strength to follow it, and his *constant desire* is towards it. Therefore the

Almighty throws before him the shield of his sanctifying power, and he finds the full blessedness of that promise, "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.—Proverbs, vi.

Consider, my friend, the noble model set before every believer, every aspirant for heaven. Is it not enough to kindle the highest ambition, the most exalted aims of an immortal soul—to contemplate Christ's character—Christ on earth, —the Son of God veiled in our human nature—God in Christ "holy, harmless, undefiled!"—Sinless perfection, perfect love, unruffled meekness, glowing zeal, untiring benevolence, heavenly teaching, spotless purity;—these are all before us for our humble imitation. Happy is such discipleship, and bringing its own reward in proportion to its diligent following out—for *holiness is happiness.* "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord," is the motto of every true disciple of Christ, and the Holy Spirit supplies him with strength, armour, and victory.

It is true that the Christian has a steep moun-

tain to climb, and when he attains the summit of one ridge, he sees a valley between him and the next height, and so on.

Sometimes he is near sinking in morasses, into which the soft carpet of brilliant mosses has allured him; sometimes he is bewildered in the vast wild; but he carries with him a chart, wherein every step of the way has been accurately marked down in God's own holy word,—and he has with him a cordial, which invariably recruits his failing energies,—God's precious promises, written day by day in his heart. He has also a companion with power to soothe all fear and comfort all trouble—the Holy Spirit of his God.

And, in his ascent, *all* is not rough. He finds many a pleasant spot whereon to rest, and look back on the difficulties he has surmounted; many a lovely prospect refreshes his eye and his heart as he mounts; many a traveller, going the same road, greets him affectionately, and speaks "a word in season" to cheer him. And, at last, when the summit is attained, all his past troubles are swallowed up in the joy of that heavenly country, into which an entrance is fully and freely *granted him.*

Yes, my friend, when the complete fitness of the Christian is apparent to the Lord who bought him; when the Sanctifier has made him meet for the Master's use; when the refiner has done his purifying work; then the "lively stone" is removed to the glorious temple of God, and grace is perfected in glory.

Yet let not the *weakest believer* at the feet of Jesus, with only one little spark of love in his heart, and no works to shew, faint within himself at this description; let him remember that Christ is all, and can save to the uttermost.

Ah! if we could but live up to our privileges! If you and I could but feel, at all times, the great work which the Holy Spirit is carrying on in our souls! Then, how far removed from us would be all repining—how calm, consistent, and happy would be our course! But although we must expect, whilst on earth, to be often clouded in spirit, let us keep close to Christ—to prayer—to the Bible,—and we shall receive "grace for grace" till we are safe in heaven.

"Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the ever-

lasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever." Amen.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

The Friend.

"Our times are in Thy hand;
O God, we wish them there:
Our life, our friends, our souls we leave
Entirely in Thy care."

HYMN.

My Dear Friend,

You complain bitterly of having no friend near you to speak to of your troubles. You wonder how I can be so contented, being exactly in the same position.

But I *have a Friend* to speak to—to weep before—to bear my poor, weak, sinful heart to—to sympathise with me always, and love me tenderly, unworthy as I am of such love. We hear the worldling, the sentimentalist, the prosperous man, and especially the afflicted, continually expressing a desire for sympathy. Every person *with feelings* wants a friend who shall enter *into their feelings*, and such a friend is extolled by all as the best gift of heaven. Many find, in some degree, what they seek, in a fellow-creature; but with how many drawbacks! A husband, parent, sister, may possibly sympathise fully with

them, but can they relieve them? Are they not often compelled to stand and look on in mute and helpless anguish, whilst the dearly beloved of their soul is racked with bodily pain, or torn with mental agony? And what can they do? Nothing, nothing, nothing, but weep and pray! . . . . Even the ear of friendship will sometimes weary of the long tale of complaint which many mournful souls love to pour into it. And, even allowing a friend to be so unselfish, so exalted, as to prefer your interest to his own, he is often absent, engaged, depressed, or faint, and the arm of flesh gives way under you. *I have a Friend* who never fails, who has laid down His life for me, and yet who now lives to be my everlasting Comforter; whose sympathy speaks in words more refreshing than the dew on flowers; who knows my every trial, great or small; who is more constant than the tenderest husband, more watchful than the wisest parent; who "sticketh closer than a brother;" who has full power and strong will to relieve me. Every hour may pour out the full tide of my sorrows, fears, hope and wishes, at his feet; He is never weary *my pleading*, never absent, "neither slumbere

nor sleepeth," and is pledged by all that is most sacred and certain, to grant my petitions, either directly, or in some way more beneficial to me.

Who is this Friend? You may well exclaim, with strong yearnings of heart, "Oh that I had such a Friend!"

You *can* have Him. *His name is Jesus.*

Do you ask the path which leads to Him?

It is plainly set forth in His own Word in the most Holy Bible. The gate stands open, the green pastures and the still waters are within it, and it leads to the *sorrowless home.*

I am, I humbly trust, journeying towards that home, where the beloved of my soul awaits me; and my heart swells with ecstacy when I think that we shall stand, hand clasped in hand (as once he stood at the earthly altar), before our Saviour, our Redeemer, our *Friend indeed,*—both of us clothed simply in His righteousness, consequently lovely, happy, and immortal!

My friend, will you not meet us there?

A friend delights in bestowing gifts on the object of his affection—and the world has many gifts to

bestow, dazling to the eye and seductive to the imagination.

Look at Lady C——, one of the world's most favoured children. How richly has Nature gifted her externally! What dignified beauty! What a graceful carriage! What a fascinating address! She also possesses all that fortune can bestow. How varied and tasteful is her attire! How elegant her equipages, her furniture, her house! Her assemblies are the most select, and her acquaintance eagerly solicited. All the enjoyments of fashion and wealth are hers. Concerts, balls, races, the Rhine, Italy, and—*not* happiness.

Look within. You know her heart, history. Would you exchange with her?

Let us now consider the gifts *my Friend* has to bestow.

Have His chosen ones no beauty?

Yes, my dear Emily, when they live up to their privileges, the whole countenance is beaming with the pure and calm beauty of holiness. They are arrayed in a robe so bright, spotless, and costly, that angels cannot rival it—the garment of Christ's righteousness. And how has

this beloved friend furnished the imperishable mansions which He has reserved for himself, and wherein dwells by His Spirit the souls of his people.

The mild radiance of hope illumines them; the delicate and fragrant flowers of Christian benevolence, humility, meekness, gentleness, compassion, faith, love, charity, and kindness, embellish the chambers. The costly and solid furniture of duty, self-denial, patience, and good works, is all around. A King omnipotent is their treasurer; neither moth nor rust can corrupt their treasures; their wealth is beyond rubies or much fine gold; their enjoyments are—the sense of God's love, the peace of a tranquil conscience, and the relish they have for the innumerable blessings they receive, as taking them direct fram the hand of wisdom and love.

The gifts of my Friend are inexhaustible; his last is always his best; and He is preparing for us such good things as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man."

Surely your heart is now overflowing, as you

read, with gratitude, and you will say to your soul, in the words of the Psalmist :—" Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

The Bible.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not *sin against* thee"—PSA. CXIX.

My Dear Friend,

Words are but feeble to convey my feelings respecting the Book of books,—the Holy Bible. It has been my comfort in sore trouble, the joy of my soul in peaceful times; and I can truly say to its author, with the upraised eyes and clasped hands, and swelling heart of intense gratitude: "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." This Book, now my inseparable companion, was once the only book in my possession which I neither understood nor sought to understand, so wonderful is Satan's power in shutting the heart against its unspeakable blessings. Sunday after Sunday my Bible was taken from its place, its handsome exterior dusted, the lessons for the day duly marked, and carried with me to the house of God. The minister read the appointed portions; the beautiful

Liturgy (culled from its pages) passed through my lips, or fell on my ears, whilst my thoughts were far away. In obedience to my parents and teachers, chapters were read and texts learned day after day, but walls of adamant and gates of brass guarded the avenues to my heart. When these barriers were broken down by the amazing mercy of God, and the "strong man" was bound, who had so long kept uninterrupted possession, I began to delight in the sweetnesses of the Bible; I loved to dwell on, and appropriate its promises, and I fed my soul on royal dainties, and culled nothing but what was pleasing and smooth. This was a pleasant and lovely dream, but it *was but a dream.* Such a state cannot be realized on earth. Whilst we are here below the skies, we are taught by the word of truth that our life is a race, a battle, a purifying preparation; medicine, water, fire, are the images brought forward to describe our needful refining; and therefore, such sweet dreamings may not be our abiding state till we are safe with Jesus; yet, such dainty aliment is richly scattered throughout the Bible, just as the flowers, and fruits, and melodies of birds are throughout the creation, as cordials to

support and cheer us, and earnests of the sorrowless inheritance when the victory is won.

Next came the Law, so pure and perfect—the commandments, so minutely and plainly laid down in the Old Testament, and so beautifully touched upon by Christ in His blessed discourses. I was filled with love to my God, and I was charmed with His code of laws. Here was abundance to do, to walk in His ways, and prove myself a good and faithful soldier and servant. So I set out in my own strength, and formed many fair plans of excellence and usefulness. I was to be humble, meek, holy, obedient, calm, fervent, and heavenly-minded. Alas! how short was that career! I no sooner began to walk than I fell into pit after pit, until at length exhausted and discouraged, I sat down to reflect on what I should next do, or how I should ever be able to reach the prize held out to those who overcome, to those who endure unto the end.

The watchful Guardian, the Holy Spirit, again placed the Bible in my faint hands, and I soon found out such texts as, "From me is thy fruit found," Hosea. "My strength is made perfect in weakness." I found that Christ was the

"author and finisher" of my faith, and therefore it was evident that He must do everything in me and for me, and that I could do nothing of myself, but that, leaning upon His arm, or clasping His cross, I could do *all things.*

And now the blessed book became more than ever precious to me, and my childlike dependence on Christ opened for me mines of knowledge and wealth in the volume of inspiration. I began to search the Prophets for all that foretold my Saviour. I loved to spiritualize every part of Scripture, and to trace in all its recorded events the shadows of good things to come. In studying the historical books and prophecies, I was abundantly rewarded by the great and precious promises which are so liberally interspersed throughout, wherein God seems to delight in pouring forth the fulness of His compassion, love, and mercy.

The Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles, unfolded their treasures day by day to my grateful heart; and even now I am continually finding something new, some fresh source of instruction, comfort, or encouragement in those inexhaustible treasures.

But there yet remained portions of the gospel

which were stumbling-blocks to me for years. "*Deny thyself*,"—"*Take up the Cross*,"—"*Love not the world*;" these I glossed over, and I willingly passed on to something more congenial to my feelings. But the Holy Spirit leaves not His work half done; it is radical and complete. He leaves nothing untouched, He allows no favourite morsel to be kept back; *all* must be delivered over to His keeping, and He will not rest until He has succeeded in "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." And now (all glory be to God!) it *is* so. Weak and unsteady as I am in myself, the *whole* law and the *whole* gospel are loved by my soul and heart; and it is my aim to surrender my whole soul, body, and spirit, to that Saviour, who has said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Yes, my friend, we are indeed weak and powerless, and the farther we advance in our Christian course, the more do we feel this helplessness; but *therefore* we must not be idle, we must strive, must run, and, in all difficulties and dangers, what a Saviour is our Saviour! He

is our Refuge, Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Strength, Joy, Friend, Comforter, Captain, King. His sheltering wings are ever ready to take us under their shadow, His everlasting arms are continually open to receive us, His watchful eye is ever upon us, and His love is stronger than death.

Never let us neglect the Bible. Whatever our position or feelings may be we shall there find something to suit us. Store your mind with its riches, and they will never fail you in times of need. I speak from blessed experience. The Holy Spirit, who indited the words of life, is ever at hand to apply them. In the lowest depths of woe, when all is dark around, and we know not where to look for comfort, we can cry, as we buffet the waves, and barely keep our heads above water, "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord." His hand will be stretched out, and He will answer you, saying, —"I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."—Isaiah.

When oppressed with a sense of guilt, and fearful of forgiveness being possible, how many a soul has been saved from despair by those pre-

cious words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and peace has beamed through the cloud! When sorrow sits heavily upon you, when you cry, "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me;" the words, "Call upon me in trouble, and I will answer thee," shall comfort you. When you labour, and see no fruit of your labour, the words, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," shall be strong encouragement. When you meet with cold selfishness, and look around in vain for human sympathy, your Maker shall say unto you, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."—Isaiah liv.

Are you restless and wakeful in the night? "He is about your bed." Are you sick? "He maketh all your bed in your sickness."

Are you joyful? You will say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name."

Are you tempted to distrust God? You can say, "I will hope continually, and will yet praise Thee more and more."

Are you seeking for spiritual support? Christ says to you, "I am the bread of life."

Are you bewildered? Christ calls to you, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Do God's dealings with you seem dark? He graciously tells you, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Are you anxious? The blessed word tells you, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind, through Christ Jesus."—Philippians.

"Do you fear death? Christ says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John xiv.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Never, my friend, can you be poor with such a possession as the Bible; never can you be desti-

tute of comfort, protection, or sympathy, whilst you have all so bounteously provided in that noble Testament. Then store your mind daily with its contents, and eat and drink abundantly at this munificent banquet. All humble, sincere inquirers, who search the Scriptures, shall be "taught of God." He indited them, and He will make them plain to the souls of His children. I know full well that human nature has neither will, power, judgment, or wisdom, to search them aright, if at all,—but, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

The Holy Spirit.

"Be our guide in every peril,
Watch and guard us night and day,
Else our foolish hearts will wander
From Thy Spirit far away."

HYMN.

My Dear Friend,

You are often (you tell me) awake in the silent hours of night, and are sometimes depressed more than at any other time, by the review of your earthly troubles. I have gone through the same trial. Many a sleepless night have I passed; and when every one was slumbering in the house, the street perfectly quiet, and no sound to be heard but the ticking of a clock, it has seemed as if I lay helpless, a prey to bitter memories, which took advantage of the circumstances to seize upon my poor heart, and wring every nerve to extremest agony. Yes, all this has been mine! At length the heavens melted, and refreshing dew came down on my throbbing brow and balm from Jesus distilled into my quivering heart. One night, as I lay sleepless and restless—in the thick darkness and profound

stillness—the sudden thought came into my mind, as to what might be, were the veil removed, which the eye of flesh cannot pierce through, and what glories might be revealed to the poor lone watcher; and the thought lit up my inmost soul. It is no dream of the imagination. There *is* a region where it is always light; where God our Father, God our Saviour, God our Sanctifier, the triune Jehovah, dwells in blessedness and purity. Myriads of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are around the throne; and although we cannot see it,—although you and I on our beds, in the still dark night, cannot behold it,—yet doubtless the world of spirits is very near to us, and the blessed Scripture assures us that they are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. How honoured, how beloved are we, the followers of the Lamb, when holy angels are about our bed and about our path, and are made use of by the Almighty to the benefit of our souls and bodies in a manner which we know not how, but shall know hereafter! Jehovah, to whose eye all things are naked and open,—who has continually before Him all creation with

its wonders and immensity, who views the countless stars, and sees them moving in their appointed path with faultless regularity, views also this world, this atom in creation; and not only this world, but the very house which contains you; and not only the house, but you individually, with "the very hairs of your head" numbered by His infinitely loving care; and not only your outward form, but your heart, its inmost thoughts are open and clear to his paternal oversight. And when you sleep, how graciously does He guard your helplessness! Think what dangers surround you; what thousands of lawless beings are only kept from plundering and terrifying the defenceless slumberer by the restraining power of God. A spark from a candle,—a high wind,—a sudden affection of the heart or brain,—may deprive you of the life you so much value; and yet, morning after morning, you awake in safety and peace; and surely your first thought should be one of gratitude to your heavenly Protector who has warded off all these perils.

But though the consciousness of ministering angels is very sweet to the soul, yet, far above all

angels, there is one blessed Spirit who keeps you day and night, even the Holy Spirit of God. Think of His purity—proceeding from the Father and the Son. A Spirit of love, encircling you with sheltering wings.

When you rise in the morning, *He* prompts your sluggish heart to give God thanks. In your private prayers, *He* kindles your gracious affections—*He* thaws the ice of indifference—regulates the confession of thought,—teaches you what to ask for,—looks up to Heaven through your upturned eye,—joins together the earnest clasp of those pleading hands,—breathes in those sighs, opens the fountain of those tears which roll down your cheeks (and so relieve the overburdened heart),—and with His powerful shield keeps off the Evil One who would lure away your weak heart.

Oh! Emily, what Comforter like *this* Comforter! In your family devotions, He teaches you how to read the Holy Scriptures so as to arrest the attention of your hearers. He blesses the family altar and hallows the sacrifice.

How bountifully has God provided for your *table!* The blessed Spirit will not allow you to

partake of these comforts, without imploring a blessing on them.

In dispensing your charities and receiving the thanks of the poor, how watchful He is to check the rising pride which would say, "I do this;" and *He* causes you to give as a faithful steward and obedient servant.

How does he put down every thought approaching to sin, and cause you to shake it off as you would a serpent. And when rebellious feelings would force your lips to murmur against God, how gently does the Holy Spirit whisper such words as, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."—Heb. xii. How lovingly, yet powerfully, does the same Spirit plead, argue, reproach, restrain! What a wise Teacher,—what a real Comforter,—what a powerful Intercessor! He enhances every pleasure by causing me to receive it direct from God, and softens every trial by convincing me that my *best* interests are promoted through the wisest

correction. He raises my supplicating eye to Christ, to implore a blessing on the smallest thing I do, and He is with me when I am walking out or in the house, sleeping or waking.

"Who told you all this?" you may ask. "The Bible," is my simple answer.

"And how were you able to find all this in the Bible? Who explained it to you?" "The Holy Spirit," is my reply.

"And how did you get the help and teaching of this Spirit?" "Because I asked God *every day* to give it to me, for Jesus Christ's sake."

"And how do you know that yours is a right spirit?" "Because I find that its breathings in my soul are precisely the same as those which found words through the lips of David, St Paul, and all the holy men and women whose writings I have read; and, therefore, it must be one spirit, one faith, one hope, one Jesus, which unites us all." I look, with overflowing thankfulness, on the position in which the Holy Spirit has placed me. Looking unto Jesus, humbly lying at the foot of the Cross, leaning only on the hope of Christ's heavenly grace, resting upon a rock, *learning* from a divine Teacher!

This Holy Spirit makes the Sabbath a delight to my soul, breathes for me in the beautiful liturgy, speaks to me from the pulpit, refreshes me with "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," and hallows to me the enjoyment of the fresh summer morning, the glowing beauties of noonday, the perfume-breathing evening, and the still moonlight.

Many excellent books has the Spirit also put it into the hearts of God's children to write, besides the Book of books which God has given us; and there are some works which have afforded me much help and comfort. I would especially recommend to your notice those books which you find to treat most of *free grace* through Christ's atonement, and which *I* have found the grandest incitement to Christian activity and ardour.

I know, my dear Emily, that none of us live up to our privileges, and that our spirits will often sink from bodily as well as mental causes. But when those depressing seasons occur, let us cling to the promises as a drowning man would to a wreck. Sometimes we are so low that we cannot cling; but as in bodily weakness we have reclined our languid heads in softest confidence

on a beloved earthly bosom, so in these seasons when we cannot speak, think, or hold,—we can *rest* our souls on the Rock of ages, and soon the promises will begin to beam upon our night; first, perhaps dimly, like the grey dawn of morning, but brightening by degrees into the refulgent day of gospel hope. May God write on both our souls those gracious words, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God," Isaiah l. 10. Yes, the holy, ministering Spirit will shew you that the "Lord God is a sun and shield," and assure you, even in the utmost dearth of spiritual and bodily comfort, that "the Lord will provide." Can I leave you with more cheering words?

Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

The Poisoned Cup.

"Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast."

COWPER.

My Dear Friend,

I now have (as truth requires) to record a period of my life, which will doubtless surprise you as much as it humbles me. I was basking in the sunshine of divine favour, I thought myself very strong in the Lord; I could not for an instant entertain the supposition that I should ever love God less, or turn aside again into the world, breaking through the hedge which Christ had placed around me for my soul's safety. I became proud in my security, and Satan, that bitter and wily adversary, saw his advantage, and fully improved it.

It was such a lovely summer. The middle of July had arrived; and after a most bounteous crop of hay had been cut and saved without the slightest injury from weather, the haymakers were joyously building the rick in a large meadow, and

I, with a heart brimful of gratitude, was giving directions about a harvest supper, to refresh all who had worked for me. A letter was put into my hands from a female relative whom I had never seen, and who had just arrived from abroad, and it announced that she would be with me that afternoon, to pass a week with me. Naturally shy and retiring, and my deep seclusion having fostered these feelings, I was flurried and annoyed by this sudden announcement, but I gave the necessary orders for her reception.

She arrived, and from the first moment she accosted me, she took my foolish heart captive. There was a grace, a frankness, a combination of the most opposite qualities, all charming, together with a high, aristocratic tone, which rendered her, *to me*, quite irresistible ; I only thought how I could please her. She admired the scenery around with all my own enthusiasm, and looked at me with an expression of deep interest which drew me strongly towards her.

The time for evening prayer arrived, and she was told that I was going to ring for the servants. She pleaded fatigue, took her candle and retired to bed. During her stay she evaded being pre-

sent at family prayer, and (coward that I was, traitor to my King!) I never once alluded to the subject. I felt it impossible to speak to her on spiritual subjects, and yet I loved her!

The next day was Sunday, and she accompanied me to church. The untutored singing of my poor friends during the service, to which I had hitherto listened with pleasure, knowing some amongst them to be "Israelites indeed," actually called up a blush of shame on my renegade cheek, when I observed the scornful smile which curled my companion's lip. The church, in its whitewashed neatness, looked to me extraordinarily mean, and above all, the excellent man who preached the pure gospel had never seemed to me so full of peculiarities and unevennesses. When service was over, my friend addressed to me one or two satirical remarks on the clergyman, and then the subject dropped. I was under a spell.

The afternoon and evening were occupied with strolling through the lovely scenery, and indulging in all subjects of conversation *but* those connected with the day. That evening I thought my beautiful and spiritual forms of family prayer

distasteful and insipid. I tremble even now when I reflect upon the excessive ease with which I fell away from my Christian course, and the wonderful power this woman exercised over me, for I am *naturally* so very fastidious.

She left me at the expiration of the week, but shortly after her visit, I went to stay with her in London, and I need not detail to you the steps by which I went back to the world; yet I had no real enjoyment, for the image of my *lost love* constantly rose up before me, and, with looks of tender reproach, seemed to say, "Jessie, is this the path which will lead you to re-union with me?" Then would I lay my poor head on my arms, and weep passionately, and call to Christ, and say, "Oh! that I might have grace and strength to devote the remainder of my life to Thy blessed, happy service, and the memory of my beloved!"

Yes, Emily, in all my wanderings, I have never been unfaithful to *his* memory. *That* spot in my heart has always been green; *that* wound has never healed; *that* love will never cease. But, alas! these passionate outbursts were but as summer storms, they quickly passed off, and I tried to serve two masters. Refinement, luxury, intel-

lectual society, high polish, the treasures of art, and all that London can offer, were precisely suited to my natural tastes; and in the soft blandishments which surrounded me, I found the *carrying of the cross* more and more distasteful, indeed, I ceased to attempt it; and soon all I could say to Christ (and that was languidly said) was, "Take my heart, for I cannot give it Thee."

My visit of some months was over, and I returned to my secluded home, with a distaste for all I had once loved. My intercourse with the poor and afflicted, my teaching the ignorant, my religious books,—I blush with shame and sorrow when I add—*my Bible*, my crucified Saviour's legacy, were all so differently viewed from what they had been, and I almost totally neglected them. It is most true, that nothing but the *love* of Christ constrains us to His service, and when that love waxes cold, His work necessarily becomes irksome.

One day I felt very sad, and I took a long walk in the lonely mountains, and having arrived at a grassy hollow, with an opening on one side, from which a scene of dreamlike beauty was visible, I sat down on a tuft of flowering heather and hare-

bells, and listlessly enjoyed the soft air which just fanned my face. Suddenly I heard the note of the wood-pigeon at a great distance, but in the profound stillness it was quite clear. It came nearer and nearer, till it settled in a thicket of oak close at hand, and there it murmured forth its gentle cooing as *we* had so often heard it together in days when I thought myself strong in the Lord. It touched a chord in my half-hardened heart, which painfully vibrated; it recalled scenes in my life, of past happy tranquillity and peace with God, and I could not forbear repeating, as I shook my head mournfully, "Oh! that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when His candle shined upon my head, and when, by His light, I walked through darkness," Job xxix. I sat in deep musing for a long, long time, feeling thoroughly discouraged by the sense of my extreme weakness. I murmured at length, whilst the tears rolled slowly down my cheeks, "Jesus, carry me, for I cannot walk;" then I relapsed into sullen apathy. I had been, for a great many years past, in the daily habit of putting a text into my memory, and now, *in extremest* need, that treasury of right and good

words sent forth a message to rouse me from the lethargic effects of the poison in my very soul. The message was: "And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise, and eat," 1 Kings xix. Surely the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, has ever dealt most sweetly and gently with me, —one of the weakest and most unprofitable of His children. "I *will* arise and eat," I said; "I *will* feed more on the bread of life."

I was oppressed with a load of gratitude when I reflected that, at this moment, an angel, the angel of the covenant, *had touched me*,—not Satan, as I deserved, but a holy, pure, loving angel; not with the rough agonies of remorse, but with a gentle though thrilling touch, which ran through every nerve, as did the look which our Lord turned on the backsliding Peter.

I hurried home—I shut myself up in my quiet room—and I poured forth my heart in the deepest humility before God. When I say "poured forth my heart," I should rather say, knelt at the mercy-seat in the perfection of humility and emptiness—no excuse to make—no good resolutions formed—no good thing to shew—no plea to bring forward, but simply this:—

"Because Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee."

Then did I press my Bible tightly to my breast and humbly murmur :—"In all my future wanderings, never again, blessed Jesus, let me neglect my Bible! Oh! as thy blood was shed for me, pity my weakness and hear my petition, and make my soul to grow in grace, in the strength of this nourishment." I remained for a long time on my knees, after the supplication, until I felt the "peace of God" again pervading my whole being. Then I arose and turned to the 2d chap. of Jeremiah. I first read that touching question :—"Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" Long, long did I meditate on these words. What *had* I found in the Lord? I had found everything that my soul most admired or desired. I had found the most spotless purity—the most expansive as well as minute beneficence—the most unlimited love—"perfect freedom"—the most admirable order—the highest, grandest subjects for meditation—the tenderest sympathy, the richest inheritance

—the mightiest Protector—the meekest Comforter—the blood of atonement, which gives *rest and peace.* Then my tranquil home here below, my numerous avocations and tastes, my health, the esteem of my neighbours—I could not enumerate all I have found *in* and *from* my God. And what had I found from the world, during the period of my backsliding? No sympathy for my yearning heart; a broken cistern when I thirsted; *a turning aside of soul* at the thought that I could not ask a blessing on my course; a sharp pang at the name of Jesus; in fact, a state which has neither past or future for happy contemplation.

I arose to go to my Father, and He saw me afar off, and came to meet me, and carried me into the fold, and I am again low at His footstool, but with a trembling sense of my great weakness, and a complete dependence on His grace and strength. But I think that the poor sheep who had nearly perished from drinking of the poisoned water, and who has been rescued and skilfully, as tenderly, treated by the great Physician, will not *at last* be allowed to perish everlastingly.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

The Increasing Fruit of Faith.

"His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. . . . From me is thy fruit found."
—HOSEA XIV.

My Dear Friend,

How anxiously (you may remember) my gardener watched the greengage trees last year! He had trained them against a most promising wall, pruned them at the right season, enriched the ground, and taken every precaution he could think of to ensure a plentiful produce of my favourite fruit.

The following spring, the trees were covered thickly with their pretty blossoms, yet still he feared frost or blight; but, at length, the fruit was formed, and in due season ripened by the glorious summer sun into luscious, fine-flavoured greengages, which he carefully netted to preserve from birds, &c. You partook of the fruit, and were pleased to think I had such an attentive, industrious gardener. Such—and a thousandfold more—solicitude and tender care has been be-

stowed on me, a plant of grace, by the great Husbandman; and shall not warm gratitude fill my heart, and shall not *some* fruit of the right sort be rendered unto Him for all his training? Undoubtedly it shall be my joy and privilege to work for such a Master! It is pleasant to look back on the gradual increase of my *willing* service: first the bud, then the blossom, then the fruit, which is poor and immature here, but which only wants the heavenly climate to bring it to perfection. And in considering this, I am simply meditating on the goodness of God, who has caused the desert to blossom by His own power and blessing.

There was a time when my money seemed to me a possession which I held independently of any control. I never dreamt of its being a *trust*, that I was accountable to a Master, that I was a steward, an almoner, and that although God wills that we should enjoy His gifts to our own comfort, yet that we are to remember our tenure, and the great object of all gifts, mental and bodily, namely, to glorify the heavenly Giver.

A naturally warm heart frequently led me into sudden acts of munificence; indeed, I was habi-

tually what is called *generous*. This the world admires, and yet I denied myself no one thing *on principle*, for the sake of giving to the needy. I despised and hated meanness and parsimony; yet was it noble to defraud my heavenly Master of His dues by lavishing on hurtful pleasures what belonged to His cause?

But how has grace changed the aspect of affairs! It is now my delight to deny myself, that I may have to give to the destitute and afflicted; and this change springs solely from the constraining love of Christ, which makes duty a privilege. Can you restrain tears of sweet emotion, when you reflect on those gracious words, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again."

Wonderful condescension! Amazing love and care for the poor and helpless, which deigns to affix a gracious promise to such a simple duty! And no votary of pleasure can find in his most fastidiously chosen amusement, one tithe of the real happiness which the servant of God can enjoy, when ministering comfort *for Christ's sake* under the lowly roof of poverty. On passing the

threshold, I raise my heart to God, and ask His Spirit to accompany me, and enable me to speak a word in season.

It may be that I find the father of the family, its stay and support, sick and unable to work, sitting helplessly beside his cheerless hearth, his head leaning on his hand, and his depressed air shewing utter discouragement, as well as physical suffering. His poor wife looks mournfully at him, her untutored mind suggesting no comfort for her afflicted partner beyond that affection which a merciful Creator has implanted in the breasts of all His creatures as a solace in the dark hour. I enter as a being led by Christ—Christ, the friend of the friendless,—and the sympathy I bestow comes through me as through a channel, a willing instrument in the hands of the God of all comfort. The money I place in the wife's hand is to her a precious boon. She casts a look of affection at her suffering husband, expressive of joy at the thought of the relief this sum will obtain for him, and silently she displays before him the gift they so sorely needed. Is not this pleasure, my friend?

Has God shut us out from all enjoyment, be-

cause He has seen fit to take away the *one heart that really loved us?*

Is it no delight to see the languid eye of the invalid kindle with a hope long a stranger to it? Is it no pleasure to see the flush of delight on the wasted cheek, to hear the faltered words, "*I* cannot repay you, but the Lord will?" And as I left the cottage, my heart swelling and my eyes tearful, I have often said, "Lord, *do* repay me a thousandfold, but let it be with Thy love; pour it into my heart, and enrich me with all the graces of Thy Spirit." Then how pleasant it is to provide the little delicacy, or nourishing food, for the sickly appetite. In vain the poor wife had placed before her husband the coarse fare which formed their daily food, and entreated him to eat. With anguish wringing her heart, she had noticed the dull eyes of sickness scanning the untempting morsel, and then he has turned away from it in utter distaste. *And yet his life depended on nourishment!* Oh! the bitterness of soul to know that all her helpless love could procure him no better!

At such a moment, perhaps, my nicely-prepared morsel arrives, and is eagerly taken and

relished by the invalid. Then, from day to day, I nourish his poor frame, and soon, with God's blessing, I see him restored to his labour, and surrounded once more by a cheerful and smiling family.

Is it no pleasure to clothe the shivering form in warm, comfortable dress, to supply fuel for the cheerful fire, and to assist in restoring to the poor children a neatness of apparel, which all the honest industrious efforts of decent poverty could not supply, when sickness had swallowed up every past earning?

Is it no pleasure to cause joy and gladness in the humble habitation, when the blessed anniversary comes round of our Saviour's birth,—that Saviour, who not only loved the poor whilst He was on earth, but has left them, while the world lasts, to the care of their more favoured brethren? Shall we not thankfully receive this trust, and love to fulfil it to the utmost of our power?

Is it no privilege when we find the widowed mourner weeping as though her heart would break, dark and comfortless,—is it no privilege, I ask, to offer her the sympathy which the divine Saviour offered at the grave of Lazarus? Did

Jesus weep? and shall not His humble, sincere followers be ready to give such tribute of their feeling towards a suffering fellow-mortal?

There is no sorrow, in my opinion, so sacred, so unapproachable by words, so *complete*, as that of the widow, especially if she be advanced in life. I once entered the cottage of such a widow, a few days after the interment of the husband of her youth, the faithful companion of twenty years! I had long known and esteemed her. All the excitement and bustle was over. Her poor little room was neat, but looked *so* desolate! Her fire of turf was nearly out, and it was very cold weather, but *she* felt no cold. She was seated on a low stool by the hearth, her head buried in her arms, moaning and rocking herself to and fro, as if to lull the agonising throbs of memory. Extreme poverty had only allowed a black riband round her cap, and a very worn scanty black skirt. But oh! what are outward symbols of richest silk, and folds of crape, and monuments of polished granite! *God saw that here was grief indeed, and He did not leave her comfortless.* He put it into my heart to seek her, and I went, conducted by His own gentle Spirit.

She did not hear me knock at the open door, so I went in and walked softly up to her, and spoke her name, but she did not notice me. I then knelt beside her, and put my arm round her, gently pressing her towards me. She lifted her poor head and looked at me, with her dry, hollow eyes and pale, desponding face. My tears burst forth, and when she saw them her countenance worked, and she gave way and wept abundantly; and though she could only exclaim, over and over again, "Oh! my husband! my husband!" yet every tear and sob did her good, and helped to melt the icy load upon her heart.

In *such chastening* few can kiss the hand that smites, whilst poor nature is quivering and writhing under the strokes; few can feel it to be, what it undoubtedly is, *right and just;* few can say with Job, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." *That* comes *afterwards* with most of us. Yes, my friend, at such a moment, in that lonely room, when there was no sound but the sobs of the mourner, and where I offered my heartfelt sympathy, Jesus was present in spirit. He saw the widow's tears, and He saw my humble efforts. He warmed my heart with Christian love and

compassion. And weeks after, when the bowed soul of the mourner began to rise from the first crushing pressure, He supplied me with words of solace, He opened my lips, and some blessed passages from the book of Life fell on the widow's ear. She listened whilst, gently and soothingly, I shewed her that it was a *Father's hand* which inflicted the stroke, that she must turn her eyes from the grave to the heavenly mansions, where Christ dwells in everlasting felicity; that *He* is a husband to the widow, and has graciously softened her heart by affliction, in order that she may receive the precious seed He is ready to drop into it; and if she will cast her burden on the Lord, He will sustain her. Might not this be the means of drawing her to her knees, to her Bible, to her God? If so, can I say I have no pleasure?

I have held forth the word of Life at the bedside of the dying, and when I have found them cheerless and restless, I have brought to their minds portions of that word which can open the gates of Heaven, and cause the humble penitent to rejoice, through Jesus, in prospect of the "glory to be revealed." And how do I deserve

the book of Life, which is better than "the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold,"—which speaks of what is more "precious than rubies," and will be, I think, a fountain of blessing to each of them.

Childhood is lovely, but never *so* lovely as when thus employed; and when my heart yearns over these young creatures, in desires for their earthly and heavenly welfare, I feel a joy in doing what I *can* for them. And after their instruction, when I send them to amuse themselves on the soft, smooth turf of my lawn, the voice of their merry play is music to my ears.

The elder class is, also, deeply interesting. I see before me young girls at that critical age when childhood has just passed away, and the world, with all its temptations, is opening before them. Inexperienced and ductile, they will soon be sent into service—perhaps in a small tradesman's family, perhaps in rougher farm-service,—and it is a very doubtful matter whether the atmosphere will be congenial to the tender plant of grace, if such should be in their soul, whether a godly family will be their happy destination. Shall

they go into danger without a shield? Shall the enemy find their hearts as an unwalled garden? Shall they not be taught, by repeated line upon line teaching, that there is armour in the gospel treasury exactly suited to their need?

Their parents, too frequently, are ignorant and culpably indulgent, and the young people have been allowed to grow up as weeds. Blessed is that parish and district where a *Christian minister* presides, and is indeed a shepherd to his flock! But, alas! this blessing is not always vouchsafed, and then the lambs run hither and thither, seeking nourishment in barren wastes, where the wolf wanders fearlessly, and devours them at his pleasure.

Is it not a pleasant task to open their young minds to the *beauty of holiness*—the love of their Saviour? To inspire them with the desire to be the light of their homes, a blessing to their families, and to carry with them, into service, a heart devoted to God, and a sincere and earnest desire to do their duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call them?

Many Christians are highly gifted, can speak fearlessly and eloquently for their divine Master,

can write most affecting and edifying appeals to their fellow-men, can make noble sacrifices in the cause of charity, and can conquer their own sinful tempers and inclinations. But *how few* can walk in this apparently easy path:—"To do their duty in that state of life unto which it hath pleased God to call them?"

Humble, patient walking in the direct line of duty, such as God points out to us, requires more real heroism, more elevated devotion and strong love to Christ, than would enable us to suffer martyrdom for our faith. It is this, nevertheless, which God requires, and which He alone can and will enable us to do, if we claim His own precious promise, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Is not that "right-hand" Christ, who has loved us from the beginning, and will love and support us unto the end?

And when the end comes, and our quiet, patient walking has led us to our Saviour's presence in the eternal world, our ears will be saluted with that joyful invitation: "Come, ye blessed

of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Oh! wondrous love, mercy, and condescension of the Saviour, whose lips uttered these gracious words! That you and I, my beloved friend, may hear this invitation in the last day, when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, is the trembling hope of,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

Who made thee to differ?

. . . "My soul is caught:
Heaven's sovereign blessings, clustering from the cross,
Rush on her in a throng, and close her round,
The prisoner of amaze!"

YOUNG.

My Dear Friend,

You say, "All is very true that you bring before me, and I acknowledge the force of it; but still my trials are so *peculiarly* vexatious, that I find it impossible to *feel* that mercy guides my path, although I may coldly assent to it."

I allow, my friend, that God, in his infinite and inscrutable wisdom, *has* seen fit to try you in a degree very hard to bear; but permit me to set before you one or two cases of your fellow-creatures, and then say whether you are favoured or not.

You have seen Mrs ——. Her talents and beauty were not more admired than her sweetness of manner. But, alas! she was brought up wholly for the world, and what fruit has this education borne? Could anything be more brilliant than her career, from the time when she was

launched into society, thoroughly fitted, in the opinion of her friends, to adorn it? Her bright, yet soft, hazel eye, her fascinating smile, were welcome everywhere, and she was the pride of her old father's heart. I saw her as a bride; she entered the crowded gallery where an interesting public ceremony had collected a vast assemblage of rank and fashion. Even in that bright assemblage she made a sensation. Her sweet face was shaded by a veil; a white satin *pelisse* fell in rich folds around her figure, and altogether she was beaming with animation and loveliness. But there was a restlessness in her eye savouring of that spirit of the world, far from that "peace which passeth all understanding."

As time passed on I occasionally heard strange rumours respecting her, until, at length, that fatal step was publicly announced, which it must require a mighty rending asunder of gracious restraints for a woman to take, and which, *once taken*, is irrevocable!

I last heard of her, with the partner of her sad fall, living amidst some of the most beautiful and tranquil scenes in the world. As she looked from her window on the grandeur and loveliness around,

what must have been her feelings? Did no thought of the noble ancestral home she had disgraced, and left *for ever*, agonize her heart? No remembrance of the too-indulgent mother, whose bosom had so often pillowed her head in childhood and womanhood, and been the repository of her joys and sorrows? No vision of her sorrow-blighted father rise up between her and a happy future?

Who would sympathise with her now? Would the partner of her guilt? Vain, vain, vain thought! Already does he meditate an escape from the burden he has brought on himself! Did no thought, in that foreign land, come over her, of the quiet Sabbath in her own beautiful Scotland, when she had listened to the church-bell with an untroubled heart, and, with her parents, had gone to the house of God, and taken her place, surrounded by an honest, industrious tenantry, who looked up to her for example and comfort? Where does she worship now?

Could she bear to meet the eye of her father's lowliest retainer? Poor, poor thing! Where is the guide of your youth? What have you done with your Bible? Where is the "Good night,

God bless you, my child," of the proud, fond father, the husband's trust, the children's love?

Where, poor sinner, is your smooth forehead, your bright smile, your elastic step? *Gone for ever!* The frivolous forget you; the proud despise you; the fallen, like yourself, have no comfort for you; and the good blush, whilst they pity you. And what does Jesus do? He says, by His own Spirit, through His prophet:—"And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me."—Jer. iii.

Oh! that you could and would answer:

> "Just as I am, and waiting not
> To rid my soul of one foul blot,
> To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
> Oh! Lamb of God, I come!"—HYMN.

Even now, as I write, I lift up my eyes to the mercy-seat, and ask that you may be saved through that blood which "cleanseth from *all sin.*"

Could you have seen, as I did,—one lovely summer Sabbath morning,—your aged father, walking feebly into church (for your sin has sadly broken him down) alone, and utterly depressed in form and countenance; could you have

seen him in his solitary pew, bending, with difficulty, his aged form before his God, his thin hands covering his venerable face, his white locks going down in sorrow to the grave, touching the hearts of all who looked on him, who *had* hearts, —surely it would have rent your soul.

Would that the voice of conviction could reach you, poor outcast! Still the door of mercy is open; still may the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, place in your hands the book of Life; your eyes may yet rest on those words:—"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."

Still can a look from Jesus melt your heart, though it were adamant, and prostrate you at the throne of grace, whilst you cry: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy child." That heavenly Father would not turn away his face.

Your earthly father no longer lives. That door of hope is shut for ever upon earth; that sting must yet make every nerve thrill and quiver with mortal agony. *But you can redeem the past.* You can live yet as that tender father

would have had you live; or rather, if he now sees you, as he would wish you to live,—in deepest humility, in honest industry, in devotion to good works, especially seeking to solace the old and desolate, as an atonement for the wrongs you did *your* old sorrow-crushed father. And, in time, the peace of Jesus would visit you, and you would learn to look for the new state, sinless and sorrowless, when time shall be no more.

Now, my friend, look at *your* position; consider how *you* have been guarded and hedged in. Who made *you* to differ?

You also remember Mrs T. You and I were, for a time, in the gay world with her; but our heavenly Shepherd threw His protecting care around us, and shielded us from evil.

I first met her as Miss —— at a brilliant assembly. She was standing—the centre of an admiring circle. Her beauty was of the noblest sort. Calm, and perfectly self-possessed, she was evidently attracting as much by her wit as her loveliness. Her dress was classically simple, and no ornament was in her dark hair.

Was this a position for a young maiden? Where was the retiring modesty which should

ever accompany her age and sex? Where was her mother? She was in another room, attracting a similar circle by *her* beauty and wit.

I next saw this gifted being immediately after her marriage. It was at a morning party, where all others were gaily dressed. She entered, leaning on her husband's arm—a thick black lace veil almost concealing her face, and a careless simplicity about her whole dress, shewing her consciousness of surpassing beauty. Her husband appeared to see no one but her; she was his free choice, the delight of his eyes; and, probably at that time, she thought herself worthy of his trusting affection. Perhaps she valued it not as she ought to have done. Would she not *now* endure years of suffering to regain that trust and that affection?

Some years elapsed before I again saw her, and a great change had come over her. She was dazzlingly beautiful. Her countenance had acquired perfection of loveliness which riveted the eye. She was on the arm of a lady noted for her vanity, frivolity, and prettiness, and one of the very last persons a sensible husband would select for his wife's companion.

The change in Mrs T.'s expression of countenance was very remarkable. *Nature* had no longer any play *there*. The feelings of her heart had been forbidden to appear. She was the polished, heartless woman of fashion,—at least such was evidently her *aim*, but she had strong feelings under that exterior. The last time I saw her was at a picture-gallery. I came upon her suddenly; and had I not heard some one mention her name, I should not have known her. She was accompanied by one who was a stranger to me, and intently engaged with him in examining one of the pictures; but on considering that face, I soon recognised the once lovely Mrs T. She was still extremely handsome; but what whirlwinds of ungovernable feeling, what anger, grief, perhaps remorse—at all events, yearning regrets —had passed over and devastated her soul, and fixed their indelible marks on her features! *She and her husband had parted.* Years roll on, and still she is in the same position. Separated irretrievably from her natural protector by her own folly and imprudence (to use the mildest terms), a lonely being.

What can it avail that she is richly gifted and

endowed with deep feelings? They were not sufficient to make her home happy, or cement the bond of union, which should be as indissoluble as it is sacred. *Religion* was wanting, and I fear is still wanting; and although she may wet her pillow with her tears, and pour out her heart's griefs on paper, they are still fruitless, and burn in the anguish deeper into her poor soul. It is the "sorrow of the world," and full of deadly bitterness. She still seeks, in a round of amusement, and in *questionable* society, to forget, and tries to brave out the world's censure. Oh! what a powerful rampart can Satan intervene between heaven and the sinner, when his material is *pride!*

What a noble being she might have been, with so much feeling, and an intellect capable of being finely moulded! But no parent's hand undertook that moulding; no parent's prayer brought down a blessing on that gifted child; and this ardent mind, left to itself, grew into wild luxuriance, and, untutored, was open to every blast of temptation. She might have been the sensible, accomplished, elegant, affectionate companion of her husband,—his comforter in sorrow, and the smoother of his declining years, walking

hand in hand with him in the path which leads to heaven, and only parted from him, to resign him into the bosom of Jesus; or else, herself—yielding his spirit to the Saviour who died for her—have left a soft train of light behind her, a sweet, sad recollection, which attends the memory of the just.

And then, the children God gave her? She might have been surrounded by them, instead of their being carefully kept from her. To her they might have looked up as to a bright example of excellence. The family prayer would have brought down family blessings; and her brilliant talents, laid at the feet of Jesus to be sanctified, would have been graciously accepted, and used to His glory, and her own and her fellow-creatures' comfort and edification. She never can be *stoical*, it is not in her nature; and as she has walked so long in the path which leads to destruction, and has eaten such poisonous fruits that she is now suffering from the venom which they have infused into her veins, let us earnestly hope that mercy may lay its saving hand upon her, that she may retrace her steps, and find that "narrow way which leads to everlasting life."

There is "balm in Gilead" to cure the wounds of her heart; there is a fountain in which she can wash her soul, and make it as white as snow; there is a Saviour who is ready to receive her with love and compassion, if she will but come, in sincere penitence, to His cross; there is a Sanctifier who is ready to free her from the *power* of sin, and to purify every thought and affection; and there is a heaven of peace and joy where she may yet be received, to live for ever and ever with myriads of happy spirits, redeemed like herself from sin and sorrow, and who have found the unspeakable blessings of the atonement, and rejoice in presence of the Lamb of God, who purchased them with His own blood.

But, my friend, she has, with her own hands, torn to pieces the delicate web of her *earthly* happiness, and it *never*, *never* again can be repaired!

Now, reflect on the distinguishing mercy of God in *your* case. Again, I ask, "Who made thee to differ?" Bless God that He, from your earliest years, surrounded you with such gracious restraints, good moral teachers, kind, solicitous parents, an affectionate heart, which could not bear to grieve those it loved. Bless God, that in

the midst of the world's gaieties, He never lost sight of you, designing to claim your heart in His own good time, and supporting you from sinking into destruction by His "everlasting arms." Bless God that He, at length, brought you to Himself, gently and gradually, and made you a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Bless God for the chastening, purifying process which is even now going on in your heart, and fitting you for a heaven of holiness.

In the unsanctified heart, what a wild, undisciplined herd is suffered to run at liberty, trampling down every flower of paradise, and poisoning every pure source of enjoyment! But when the Spirit of the Lord takes possession, all is order, peace, and submission; and though (sad to say) the evil is still there, it is *chained;* and its convulsive efforts to break through restraint, and conquer the kingdom of heaven in the heart, and root out the thriving plants of grace, are all hushed and awed by that gracious voice which speaks for us, and says to the storm within, "Peace, be still;" and the same well-known voice speaks to

our faltering resolution, saying, "Fear not, I am with thee."

Bless God for the position you occupy, entirely through His free bounty. You may possess the esteem of your richer neighbours, the love of the poorer; you may go amongst them full of the desire to benefit them, soul and body; and many a wrinkled brow may clear at your cheerful greeting; and many a smiling young face may gladden your heart as you look upon those you have helped to feed, clothe, and teach. You enjoy quite sufficient of this world's good to afford you all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, with a surplus for God's cause. You have a pleasantly situated home, a heavenly Guardian, a divine Shepherd, and above all, a heart that knows God, and the *path of the atonement*, and which *is honest*, at all events, if weak and faint. And if the wise Creator should see fit to mingle needful correction with such abundant mercies, shall you murmur and rebel? Ah! no; rather remember, with thankfulness, what the Holy Spirit says through St Paul,—"Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the

peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them *which* are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Hebrews xii.

May the blessed Comforter be with you !

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Submission.

"From purity of thought all pleasure springs,
And from an humble spirit all our peace."

YOUNG.

My Dear Friend,

No one can agree with you more fully than I do, that to say from the heart, "not my will but Thine be done," is the most difficult attainment when trial presses us. We may plead the promises with glowing faith, we may pray as if actually clasping the blessed feet of the Saviour from whom we expect everything; we may, as it were, see His gracious head bent down to listen to our fervent petition, His pitying look at our flowing tears; and yet when we find the affliction still continued, what becomes of all this faith and childlike clinging with too many of us? I have gone through this ordeal, and I humbly confess that rebellious thoughts, and doubts of everything, that had before yielded me most comfort, assailed me powerfully, though, thank God! they

were quelled and dispersed by my heavenly Guardian.

I also confess, my friend, that I have been tempted to abandon writing comfortably to you. I have been utterly discouraged to find that my letters, latterly, have been apparently useless to you, and that *complaining* is still your constant strain. But I repent of my impatience, and will commend you constantly to Jesus, and urge *you* to "pray without ceasing." Yes, it behoves us to pray constantly for *Christian submission*, and not only to pray for it, but frequently to meditate on the reasonableness of it, and the peace which it brings.

Let us consider some of the grounds we have for acquiescence with God's dealing towards us. In the first place He is our *Father*. Remember your earthly father, how tenderly he loved you; how he rejoiced in your happiness and grieved for your griefs. Had he allowed you to grow up under his roof like a wild creature, with no restraints, no instruction, would you have thanked him now? Would his memory have been so dear to you? Would he have *really* desired your welfare?

When we consider the immeasurable superiority of God over a frail mortal, we shall understand that *all* His attributes and qualities must be proportionably greater in degree and purity. Did our earthly father thus love us? How then does our heavenly Father regard His own created and redeemed children? And if all the riches and pleasures of the world were good for us, would He not bestow them on us with paternal bounty? He sees His child a rebel by nature, wilful, headstrong, and ignorant. Under such circumstances an earthly parent would fain choose for his son a preceptor, in every way qualified to coalesce with him in ruling the spirit of his child, breaking his self-will, and leading his stubborn heart to obedience and submission. The preceptor would not consider his work done if only a few faults were conquered, and others as bad, or worse, left untouched. If needful his severity would increase, and, one by one, the indulgences he had granted would be withdrawn, until such a renovation had taken place, as would justify him in following the dictates of his benevolent feelings, and bestowing on his pupil all lawful gratifications. Would the preceptor be acting kindly towards the youth, or

the father consider his real happiness, by indulging his evil will one hour and contradicting it the next? Thus our heavenly Father places his child under the law of a preceptor and teacher, possessing every qualification to educate a soul for time and eternity, even His own Holy Spirit; and the schooling required is oftentimes very severe, and to the scholar seems needlessly harsh; but as every single sin has to be conquered, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," the soul *must* be kept under chastening until it is moulded into the perfection which will fit it for a holy and sinless heaven.

Whilst the carnal will remains like a "bull in a net," can it with safety be let loose? No; it must be tamed to the harmlessness of the dove; it must be meek and lowly, humble and contrite; and all this that it may at length be joyful in the God of its salvation.

Next, we should consider that our heavenly Father is infinitely *wise*, and it is a great consolation to think that, from morning until night, everything that happens to us, if we are His chil-

dren, is ordered and arranged so as exactly to suit our case, and that no other position than the one we occupy would be effectual in working out for us that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which God designs for his purified sons and daughters. Yes, in health, sickness, pleasure, or pain, your portion is allotted you by the same tender, pitiful, yet judicious Saviour, who said, "As many *as I love* I rebuke and chasten."—Rev. iii. Is He rebuking you? then *He loves you.*

You sometimes say, "Were I situated as you are, how active would I be for God!" But it pleases God that you should sit at home, the wings of your impatient spirit clipped, and do His will by patient endurance; and if all around you, knowing that a daily trial wrings your soul, were to see you calm, your kind though chastened smile, your softened, mildly beaming eye, your complete silence as to your *own* grief, whilst the troubles of all others are listened to with sympathising sweetness, your unvarying performance of your duties quietly and cheerfully; and, above all, your constant theme, by word or letter, that "*God is love,*" then would God be glorified,

because they will be constrained to acknowledge that human nature alone could not thus support you, and they may seek to learn *your way* of bearing trial.

When you long to be of more use to your poor neighbours, to clothe and feed the destitute, and take by the hand the young and promising, placing them in situations which money could procure, then you wish that you had the means of your richer neighbours. But your *Father wills* that you should be content to leave them in His hands, and He leads you to give them what you *can*, accompanied by your prayers, example, and sympathy.

You think that if you had more leisure you would be much more spiritual; but do you fully improve the little you have? Have you made your Lord's *one talent two talents?* Is every spare moment so treasured and improved that you *deserve* more? Are you never slothful or trifling in those precious moments? Although you cannot be always meditating on your Saviour, yet in every hour He is near you, observing you, upholding you, and strengthening you to do your duty according to His own appointment (unless you

wilfully leave His arm, and wander after some pleasing delusion of your own), and this thought should sweeten duty, however monotonous or irksome it may be.

Another very powerful consolation and inducement to submission is, the remembrance that the Being in whose hands you are,—who leads you, and guides you, and chooses your path for you,—has laid down His life for you. When you reflect on this sublime and wonderful truth, it should surely swallow up all rebellious and hard thoughts of this holy One! Did He so love you as to shed His own life-blood for you? and shall you persevere in thinking His dealings with you now unkind? Can you believe that He will heat the furnace more than is needful to refine the silver?

The Saviour who was tortured and crucified for you is not far away engaged about other matters, whilst the hot tears, or upturned eye, or prostrate soul, claim His tender care and pity;—He is a "*present Saviour.*" Try to realise this.

When, as a child you had to undergo any painful operation, was it not a great support to hold the hand of one you loved, and to feel the pro-

tector close to you? In taking a nauseous medicine, can you not take it more cheerfully when administered by your dearest friend? Undoubtedly it is so. And thus you should feel it a great sweetener of trial, if, every time you are pressed in spirit and cheerless, you could realise the immediate presence of Christ, and turn your languid eyes to Him who is light, strength, and love. You would then feel the force of those words: "Fear thou not; I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," Isaiah; and you would enjoy something of that spirit which so marvellously sustained "the noble army of martyrs;" their strength was "looking unto Jesus."

Another lesson we learn in Christian submission is, looking out of ourselves, abnegation of self. That most odious vice of selfishness fades away in the heart of the chastened and meek Christian, and we learn to make ourselves happy by promoting the happiness of those around us. By your gentle, serene demeanour, as I before remarked, you may hush the bad passions of

others, and bring them to inquire after the source of such calmness. You can, in many ways, promote their innocent enjoyments, soothe their troubles, and watch for an opportunity to pour into their ear the consolations of God's word. The last incitement to submission which I shall dwell upon is, the shortness of the time we have to suffer, supposing that our heavenly Father should not see fit to withdraw the cloud in this life, but retain us in His chastening bonds. I know that, to an impatient spirit, this is more difficult than any other consideration. "What," will such an one say, "must all my earthly hopes of relief sleep in the dust? Have all my fervent prayers and pleadings, my tears and sighs, my trust in God's mercy,—have these all gone for nothing?" No, they *have not* been despised,—I rest assured,—not one tear or sigh; but *if* your trial is to be continued, and you continue to fix your eye on Christ, He certainly will not leave you comfortless, because "*it is written*" that He will not; therefore, waiting faith—the faith that can lean its head—though it be a drooping, tearful, fainting head—against the rock of His promises, will never prove a vain, barren faith. I cannot pre-

sume to say how the prayers of faithful sufferers will be answered, but it is sure that they will reap a rich harvest for what they have sown in pain, and watered with many tears, because it is also written, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

The time which is yet before you may be considerably prolonged, and if so,—and if you love God,—it will be honoured by His blessing, to His own glory; or it may be but a few days or hours. Yet, long or short as to time, accustom yourself to compare it with eternity, and it will seem indeed insignificant, and you will comprehend your Saviour's words, "A little while, and ye shall see me." Only reflect that *one moment* may suffice to place you for ever with the Lord; and what can there be so insupportable in enduring His chastenings for a season, with that submission which kisses the rod and says, "I know that in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me."

Submission brings peace, and peace is the Christian's happiness on this side heaven. Then, my beloved friend, commit your cause into Christ's hands, and He will turn your murmurs into praise, and your complaints into thanksgiving.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIV.

Flowers.

Sweet, lovely, remnants of Eden!

My Dear Friend,

There is a pleasure which I long to procure for you, as one peculiarly suited to your position, having a country home, to which you are bound by duty; and if other parts of the kingdom are more picturesque, and you are sensitively alive to beautiful scenery, yet your present abode *is your home;* God has placed you there, and, therefore, I would entreat you, affectionately, to make it as happy, attractive, and ornamental as lies in your power.

Gardening is a subject on which I love to dwell; and I should wish to inspire you with my own feelings on this point. You will immediately exclaim that you have no time; but I think that you could manage to appropriate at least one hour every fine day to this delightful pursuit. *Try if you can*, and the early rising in summer

which you now imagine an impossibility, will be found a pleasant and wholesome change in your present mode of life.

Divine love is legibly inscribed on the beautiful family of flowers. When the earth was cursed for the wickedness of man, these exquisite gifts were left in kindness, and many an eye and heart has been cheered by them. I am certain, that infinite Wisdom made nothing to be useless, and therefore flowers are, no doubt, intended to fill up a link in that admirable chain of creation which is harmony and order; but, at the same time, I please myself with viewing them as an especial gift of parental love, and when we read in the 1st chapter of St John—speaking of Jesus —that "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," we may know and feel that His gracious word brought into being these sweet and varied floral treasures. How can we refuse to love them? How can we look coldly at them, or neglect to surround ourselves with them, when we have the opportunity of possessing them? The Scriptures contain many allusions to them, and all our ideas *of beau*ty and fertility are associated with flowers.

There is not a forest, rock, or hedge that does not abound with them, and in the wildest solitudes they proclaim, by their matchless workmanship, their divine Maker's praise.

A walk through a flower-garden is fraught with the purest pleasure. Gather any flower that strikes your fancy, and inspect it. What combined wisdom and foresight in its structure? Whilst we gaze on its tints, texture, and form, we feel that it is perfect enough to live for ever, worthy of its maker; and yet, perhaps, as we attempt to fasten it in our bosom, that we may feast our eyes on its loveliness, or inhale its pure perfume, it falls to pieces and is gone, reminding us that better things are in store for us, and that we are not yet come to that blessed state where no decay can enter, and all is as unchangeable as it is beautiful. Then their delicious fragrance, as it comes in sudden breaths to meet us, and dies away again, again to be renewed! Could we not almost dream away a life-time in such an atmosphere and such companions—our love for them enhanced by the love of the Giver? But the cordials which our heavenly Father has allowed us to cheer us amidst our travail, must not

become our sole sustenance, or be used to excess, so as to enervate us by their enjoyment. We must tie ourselves to hours or minutes (if necessary) in their pursuit; and often have I left a flower-bed at the appointed moment, when in the midst of a most interesting occupation.

In the hope of inspiring you with a love for early-morning gardening, I will sketch *my* pleasant hour in early summer. Having prayed for a blessing on the work of my hands, I go forth into the fresh sweet air (a delight which must be felt to be understood), when the dew spangles the lawn, shrub, and flower, and the sun is gradually opening every lovely cup, and ridding every delicate head of its too heavy load of moisture. I walk with elastic step and heart full of thanksgiving to the spot which demands most of my care. I find myself standing in the midst of a valley shut in by high mountains, all richly wooded, and over which towers one peak which looks down in calm grandeur, as though it were the guardian of our peaceful homes.

The hills follow a beautifully undulating line, declining gradually towards the sea, which is shut out from our view by a rock, protecting that end

of the valley. Meadows of the most vivid green with frequent clumps of trees, and divided by grassy embankments, give the whole landscape the appearance of a private park; and the cattle, at that early hour, lowing to be milked, or returning to their pastures, add a lively charm to the scene. A river washes the boundary of our lawn, and my favourite *parterre* is spread along a turf embankment, kept closely mown, and along the top of which is a verdant walk, smooth as velvet, looking down into the river, and the inward bank, adorned with flower-beds, slopes down to a gravel walk. Our own cows, returning from the milking, cross the river at this point to a favourite pasture just opposite, or congregate under the adjacent bridge, or stand in the water looking at me with their meek eyes, whilst their fragrant breath almost fans my cheek, when I am kneeling on my little straw mat, at work, just above them. Sometimes a fisherman throwing his line, or the leap of a fish, breaks on the stillness, and adds to the charm.

My first care is to water the newly planted flowers or cuttings, as, abruptly removed from where they had been flourishing, the gentle dew

of heaven is not sufficient to enable them to encounter the whole day's sun; and as I water, they almost seem to thank me, in their mute way, by their refreshed appearance. The importance of this watering makes me feel the force and graciousness of those words of the Almighty, speaking of His spiritual garden: "I will water it every moment." How do our graces languish! How do the exotics which the Holy Spirit has planted in our souls droop and wither unless the dew of God's blessing, the "small rain," is constantly distilling upon them! Next, I search for weeds which may have sprung up in little nooks and corners, and I carefully eradicate them, that all may be bloom, and perfume, and order.

Oh, that my heart might be such!—that the blessed Spirit would weed out all that offends; and that the blossoms of gospel obedience, the perfume of holiness, and the harmony of heavenly-mindedness might be undisturbed and perfect! But I must wait for the period of "*all things new.*"

The most pleasing of my horticultural occupations is training and tying up my flowers, the lovely things seem so dependent upon my care. It is so pleasant to raise a rich cluster of bloom

from the ground which soils it, and to support it with a stake, so as to display it to the best advantage; to lift up a delicate, drooping flower, and train it against the hardy shrub it had failed to reach, blown aside by a rude wind. And thus is the mind of Christ. The richest produce of genius would grovel in carnal things, were it not raised and supported against the staff of the Cross; and every promise of the Redeemer's gracious utterance tends to strengthen the weak, comfort the drooping, and guide the erring to a stay which shall never fail them.

After I have dressed and arranged my flowers, with what pleasure do I contemplate them! And, exactly in proportion to the tenderness and fragility of the flowers, do I value and love them. The more toil I have had with them the more precious are they to me. Thus, my friend, is it with our spiritual graces, which have been implanted in our heart. Those which we have had most trouble in cultivating are sweetest in the enjoyment. The naturally weak and placid mortal does not value the calm within so much as the ardent and impetuous character, who has been enabled to tame and chasten that ardour

from the wild torrent into the quiet river which fertilises as it flows, and brought that imperious will to sit lowly at the feet of Jesus. The toil of the Christian will meet with a rich reward, even in this life, for it is blessed to feel in our hearts that, "instead of the thorn has come up the fir tree; and instead of the brier the myrtle tree," Isaiah; and to know that "the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden," Isaiah. And as I stand in my *parterre*, surrounded by God's lovely gifts, on a summer morning, I often think of the gracious words, "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." Every plant about me is rejoicing under the refreshing dew, and let it be so in my cheerful heart. I consider the stately lilies which stand before me, crowned with their exquisite bloom, pure and fragrant, as I would wish to be in holy obedience; and I joyfully adore their Creator.

I have also a charming concert to cheer me at my work. As I go out, my pretty caged doves salute me with their soft cooing, and inspire a

prayer that the holy Dove of God may descend upon me, with all its meekness and ineffable love. The blackbird's rapturous gush of melody pours forth from the clumps of evergreens which shelter me from the sun. The wood-pigeons utter their gently-mournful notes from the wooded rock behind the house. The cuckoo fills my heart with gladness, and thoughts of full, rich, bounteous summer, as I hear his call from the mountains—sometimes apparently very near, the next moment far away, faint, yet clear. The crows, who inhabit a ruined castle in our vicinity, pass over my head in their morning excursion, and caw out their participation in the general gladness. The busy bees surround me, industriously rifling each flower, and sometimes working on the very plant I am tying up; and as I am very careful not to disturb them, they never molest me, but please me by their cheerful hum and beautiful instinct. The gay butterflies add to the lively scene, and sometimes a pure white one expands its delicate wings on the flower of a large scarlet geranium, as if to display its soft beauty to the best advantage.

Thus I find my brief hour or two soon fly

away, even as the wreathing mists on the mountain tops curl upwards and disappear in the glorious sunshine; and casting a lingering look of affection at the clustering heliotropes, carnations, lilies, geraniums, and numerous other lovely plants, I return into the house for my day's duties.

This picture is very bright; but even this has its dark side. There are times when the rain pours down in torrents, and the wind rages through the valley, breaking off large branches, and causing devastation around. And can my frail flowers hope to escape?

When the gale subsides, I go out with anxious haste to visit my *parterre*, and there I find a sad scene of ruin. Beautiful clusters of bloom swept from the stem and lying on the ground; branches bereft of their leaves and flowers, waving their bare arms in wild disorder; showers of rare blossoms (whose opening I had watched with loving interest), strewing the walk; and sometimes strong plants broken off close to the root, with all their summer promise thick upon them.

This is very trying to a florist; and often have *I been* so discouraged, as almost to resolve that

I would give up gardening in such an uncertain climate, and such an unsheltered situation, and leave it entirely to the gardener. But better thoughts have succeeded these, and I have patiently begun again the work of tying and training, carrying away loads of lovely ruins, fragrant in their ruin, and hopefully pruning what remained, gathering experience, and selecting stronger stakes and better fastenings against the next blasts of wind. And, after a time, the same bounteous Providence which gave me the first harvest of beauty, again clothed the plants with luxuriant bloom, and sometimes the end of the summer is the most richly productive.

Oh, my friend, how descriptive is this of our hearts! We rejoice in our graces, we contemplate all *within* with infinite complacency, as a "watered garden;" we think ourselves so strong in duty, so united to the Saviour, that nothing can shake our faith or quench our love. The blast of adversity, or the *sirocco* of temptation, assails us; then where are the rich clusters of our pious works, which we so cheerfully brought forth when fostered by the "Sun of righteousness," and watered by the dew of God's blessing?

Where is the fragrance of our faith, which cended in the incense of praise, and which thought no storm could disperse? Where is t staff of the Cross which was to keep us fr wavering and falling? Have our faint arms it go?

Alas! too often all seems a hopeless ruin, a we sit down in despair, thinking hard thoug of God, and doubting whether He ever inde loved us or chose us. Perhaps some sin indulg some season of estrangement from God, had sw like a blighting east wind over our hearts; th remorse adds anguish to anguish, and we feel if the wreck were too great to be repaired. I once again the Father draws his child towa himself; weakened and humbled we seek t shelter of that heavenly wing; cold in spirit, are gradually warmed again in the sunshine that glorious presence; shorn of our self-righteo ness, we crave for showers of blessing; and, g dually, fertility, fragrance, and hope return the poor tired heart, and we learn experie from the wise correction, which thought it ex dient to leave us for a season to ourselves, a the end is better than the beginning. Then

rehearse, with joy and gladness, the goodness of our God: we can say of our spiritual state, as the Psalmist says of divine Providence, "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest the corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou makest it soft with showers; thou blessest the springing thereof: thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."—Psa. lxv.

I trust, my dear Emily, that what I have said may induce you to add the cultivation of flowers to the many pleasing occupations which your great Benefactor has vouchsafed you, and the distribution of your superabundant plants, and cuttings, and flowers, may diffuse around you much enjoyment, and implant a taste for this charming occupation in many a son of toil, who would embellish his hitherto dreary and neglected

little dwelling, during the hours when the public-house and idle group of evil companions are most dangerously attractive.

Your heart will enjoy sweet communion with God whilst your hands are at work; and when can such communion be more pleasant than surrounded by His gifts, and in the midst of a scene where all things, animate and inanimate, seem to breathe praise?

Try—*do try*—and you will learn to love that early, summer morning hour.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XV.

Meek and Lowly.

"Meekness is peace, and peace is our earthly happiness."

My Dear Friend,

Your yearning wish has been gratified. I passed three weeks with you, and now that I am in my own home, you write to ask me, "as I love you, candidly to tell you what I think are your most prominent faults."

This is putting me to a hard trial, for it is very painful to have the *sore* points of our character probed, as I know by experience; but I comply with your request the more willingly, as I feel that you never can have peace, much less happiness, until you subdue two faults, which caused *me* much misery whilst under your roof, and which must fret *you* perpetually. I mean that you are *suspicious*, and *easily offended.*

I am sure when you read this that you will

think me harsh, and perhaps unjust; but it is indeed a truth, that we *cannot* see ourselves as others see us; and it is with a heart full of prayerful tenderness for you, and a shrinking back from the thought of wounding your feelings, that I write as truth compels me to do.

In the innocent gaiety of the family circle, you often suspect that you are overlooked or slighted, or that some playful shaft, innocently sent forth by thoughtless youth, is intended for you. You think that your sorrows are not met with sympathy, when, all the time, perhaps, the pale cheek and sleepless night of an anxious friend evidence to her participation in your grief. You think that passages in letters are aimed at you, that affection is cold to you, friendship heartless, and, in short, that you are peculiarly unhappy, though no one can see the cause for it. The least word has power to offend you, though the offender is perfectly innocent of any such intention; and you even speak of "the averted eye" and "cold tone of voice," when your friend is an utter stranger to anything of the kind. In reading this, dear Emily, you must acknowledge that such faults, if cherished,

will not only render you perpetually unhappy, and sap the foundations of your mental and bodily health, but they will deprive you of every friend, and cause every one to shun companionship with you. You sometimes speak of yourself as possessing no qualities or attainments to attract; but all this is false humility, it is discouragement arising from pride, which expects to be a *first object*, and which causes you sometimes to speak in a manner which resembles envy of those you imagine more favoured than yourself, or as if you were angry with them for having those qualities you admire.

You will say, "If this is true, you must hate me." No, Emily; I love you sincerely, and I will tell you why.

You are a *child of God.* The mirror which reflects His image is as yet dim, and the glorious and lovely lineaments are but faintly perceptible; but I feel that the image will *never pass away* till it shines in its full lustre in "the perfect day."

And what does God, who made you, redeemed you, chose you, called you, and is now sanctifying you, see in you?

He sees what *He loves much:* "An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." There is an uprightness, a simplicity, an *innocence of spirit*, if I may so speak, which is peculiarly endearing, and a leaning on others which gains the heart, and makes them long to comfort and support you, if you will allow them to do so. Then I never met any one who had such a strong sense of *duty* as you possess. It is a *grand rock* in your character; but instead of a stern, naked rock, try to clothe it with the soft verdure of holy love—love to everything, springing from love to its Creator.

You have great delicacy of mind, a keen appreciation of what is beautiful and excellent, an affectionate, and, what is more, an *honest* heart.

Then, dear Emily, let *real* humility be added to these qualities—a humility which feels that it *deserves nothing*, and receives everything as a boon, and those thoughts which destroy your peace—suspicion, and *readiness to take offence*—will not dare to shew their ugly countenances, or shed their withering poison in your inward life. Then you will realize what it is to be the

"beloved of the Lord:" "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders," Deut. xxxiii.

If we were calmly to reflect upon ourselves, and examine faithfully the causes of our disquietude, how much should we trace to the want of that meek and lowly spirit which the blessed Jesus inculcated! Some of the most rankling wounds in our breasts have been inflicted, and are kept open, by our own strong passions and evil tempers; and often has the peace of many days been put to flight by one angry sentence which we persisted in uttering, rather than suppress, our sinful feelings. *Meek and lowly*—what pleasant images arise in the mind whilst meditating on these words! The prayer which breathes only, "Not my will, but thine be done," as the softened, chastened eye turns towards the Saviour, who enables His children thus to submit; the waiting heart, which says, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth;" the gentle obedience, ready to do God's work simply and quietly, be it ever so irksome to the human nature; the patient toil, day after day, year

after year, which derives refreshment from "looking unto Jesus;" the heart bowed before God in mild acquiescence; the humble love, which presumes not to assume a place beyond the *feet* of the Lord; the secret almsgiving; the cheerfully-borne privations for God's cause; the gentle demeanour; the kind words; the steady, soft light beaming on all around;—these are all found in the meek and lowly follower of the Lamb, and form that ornament which is, in the sight of God, "of great price." How lovely is the image presented in the baptism of Christ: "And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." What a sweet emblem did the Spirit of our God and Saviour choose!—not the eagle, with his majestic swoop, but the soft descent of the mild, harmless dove.

And this marks to all who study the Scriptures the *mind of Christ.* Tempest-tossed, weak, weary, and sick of sin, where could we find an invitation so exactly suited to our state of feeling, as the invitation of our tender Saviour: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon

you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls," Matt. xi. His mighty power, wisdom, and glory, would annihilate the poor sinners; but His dove-like spirit draws them with "bands of love."

Oh! how should every angry and perverse temper vanish away from the heart; how powerless should be any provocation to stir them up when we turn our thoughts to these wondrous words:—"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," Isaiah liii.

Did that spotless Lamb—that holy, harmless, Jesus—bear all indignities in meek silence? and shall I, a fallen child of Adam, presume to give way to storms of anger, or to speak passionate words of aggravation? Oh, no; let me cast from me all such evil feelings, and seek, by prayer, to possess my soul in peace. It is also our *happiness* to be meek. Do we not desire to know the "peace of God which passeth all understanding?" We *do* wish and pray for it, more or less earnestly, but it can only beam upon a

meek and humble soul; and when it does beam, all is serene and lovely around us, and we move along, even in the midst of turmoil and confusion, encircled by the Spirit of Jesus, guided by His love, quelling, by our presence, the fierce outbreaks of violent passion, shining with the borrowed light of our Divine Master, and becoming "living epistles" to all men of what it is to be followers of the Lamb of God. There are many gracious promises especially attached to meekness. He who spoke as never man spoke, said:—"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." And the promise is fulfilled even here; the meek *do* inherit the earth, for all things seem smooth and easy to pass through to their chastened minds.

The Psalmist says:—"The meek will he guide in judgment;" and their judgment *is* guided by heavenly wisdom, unobscured by the mists of passion; their eyes turn to heaven, there to read what their Lord would have them to do, and they hear His well-known voice, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

You remember the morning concert at ——, where we met Mrs E. and Mrs L. Shortly after

we had taken our places, Mrs E. entered with her party, her dress magnificent, her air haughty and dauntless, her whole manner betraying the pride of her heart. She swept past us, and seated herself in the foremost rank, her bright eyes, unsoftened by any gentle feeling within, wandering around in search of homage and admiration; and those about her (not belonging to her party) were viewed by her as though they formed part of an inferior species, whilst she had smiles and courtesy for her favoured companions. The beautiful music did not divert her vigilant self-importance; and yet, when her countenance was at rest, you could read nothing there that told of inward satisfaction; but, on the contrary, premature lines were traced on her fine face by the contending feelings which swayed without check in her heart. She left the concert apparently without having enjoyed any real pleasure, and seemed mortified at seeing attention paid to some others with her, which she thought all due to herself.

Mrs L. came in quietly and mildly; her dress elegant and simple, her countenance sincerely expressive of the peace within, her eye full of

calm, soft light. She glided into her seat, which was modestly retired from observation, and with sweet attention listened to the remarks of her companions. A placid expression dwelt on her features. How thoughtless of admiration she was! How single-minded in her object! She had come to listen to music which she could not hear elsewhere and she *did* listen with her whole ear and heart, whilst the tear of delight occasionally moistened her eye, and bore evidence that this meek Christian could feel as acutely as the loudest professor of ecstatic feeling.

Who can doubt in which of these breasts dwells the nearest approximation to happiness? Searcher after happiness, to which of these will you go to learn the secret? To the stormy, proud, selfish woman of the world, or to the gentle, humble, benevolent Christian, in whose heart dwells the holy Dove of peace, over whom beams the eye of a reconciled God, and around whom are spread the sheltering wings of a Saviour-Friend?

Many a priceless gem is hidden in the bosoms of the meek and lowly! Many a poor hut, many a rose-covered cottage, many an ancestral home,

the crowded workshop and busy field, contains spirits whose price is above rubies; and their day of appreciation is coming,—a day of ineffable joy, for "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him," Mal. iii. A beautiful effect of this meek and lowly spirit is, reverence for all things that should claim reverence, totally opposed to that wild, proud spirit, which would overturn the world to shake off irksome restraint, *reverence for order* in heaven and on earth, and reverence for old age. Surely, surely the bent form, the furrowed cheek, the feeble gait, the infirmities of the old man, should awaken the tenderest sympathy and respect in every feeling, well-regulated heart. What pages of life's vicissitudes may we not read in those lines and furrows! If their voyage has been stormy, they are near the everlasting land; and should we not approach them with the desire to give our feeble aid toward bringing them safe into the haven, or to infuse our little dew of consolation into their perhaps bitter cup? If their sky has been serene, shall we not draw nigh to

listen to the experience which a long, calm life has enabled them to cull leisurely from all passing events? And is it not a beautiful sight to look upon the silver hair of age when irradiated by the Sun of righteousness, to read the hope of approaching glory sometimes flashing from their otherwise dim eye? Is it not comforting to the spirit almost sick of "hope deferred," to hear from their lips that the "promise is sure;" to listen to their voice saying, "Though it tarry, wait for it;" and their confirmation of the words: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken!" Is it not cheering to see them worship "leaning upon the top of their staff," and cheerful on the confines of the heavenly country they have so carefully sought? Surely *age*, but above all, the aged Christian, claims our deep reverence.

I have always been much struck with the graciousness of that command, which our God condescended to deliver to His servant Moses, for the observance of His people Israel: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man," Jer. xix. If we fear the Lord, we shall love to obey this injunction.

The being who can voluntarily add a grain of sand to the burden which weighs down the aged form must be steeled against all good feeling.

And now, my friend, I commend you to the keeping of our God, who has deigned to proclaim His dwelling with the "humble and contrite spirit;" and may we both be able to say sincerely, in the words of a well-known hymn—

"As a little child relies
On a care beyond his own;
Knows he's neither strong nor wise;
Fears to stir a step alone;
Let me thus with Thee abide,
As my Father, Guard, and Guide."—OLNEY HYMNS.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XVI.

Heaven's Chancery.

"Prayer is the burthen of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near."

MONTGOMERY.

My Dear Friend,

There was one memorable period of my life, when trouble encompassed me on every side, and wave succeeded wave, almost overwhelming my soul. Mourning with a deep, sincere, and *voiceless* grief for a beloved father, whose memory I cherished as a thing too sacred for words, and under the most intense anxiety for the health of one dearer to me than life, I was also made to smart under the harsh opposition of those who ought to have been the guardians of the fatherless and the widow, but who, instead, infused bitterness into our cup. The future looked dark, but I had, even then, attained some portion of that confidence in my Saviour which can place everything at His blessed feet, and cast *all* upon His care.

I shall never forget the morning when, with

a heart ready to break, and clad in the sable dress which so truly pictured my inward feelings, I accompanied my gentle widowed mother, and my helpless precious invalid, to the Court of Chancery. As we rattled over the stones, through the busy streets, my head ached, and my tears were with difficulty restrained; but I *leaned on Jesus*; I remembered my heavenly Father's words: "And it shall come to pass, when He crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious," and the pressing tears of harassed nature were checked.

My poor heart sank as I entered the building where we came to lodge our rightful petition, the petition of the humble widow and fatherless. Everything seemed so vast; so many histories of lost causes, impoverished families, and long years of sickening delay rose up in my mind, that I felt sorely cast down; but my acutest feelings were not for myself; Oh! no; those helpless ones beside me!

We can, by God's help, be heroic for *ourselves* with comparative ease—yet we are cowards where more than *our* poor hopes are concerned. One of my companions was in the first anguish of a

widowed heart; the other was dependent on my frail arm for support, and my tender spirit was hurt by the business-hurried people who hushed past and *pushed them* roughly. The large doors slammed loudly and echoed harshly as we passed along, startling us, who were fresh from the quiet house of mourning. Arrived in the chamber where our business was to be transacted, a few searching glances were bestowed on our party, and the necessary forms having been gone through, our cause was regularly entered in the Chancery.

In such cases, the innocent and upright usually cling to their legal adviser, implicitly depending on his knowledge and integrity, (and our gracious Father had allowed us the aid of a feeling, honourable, and clear-headed solicitor); yet man is far from infallible at the best; and whatever may be his zeal in our cause and his integrity of purpose, he may prove in error, advise us injudiciously, and disastrous failure may be the consequence. A mere trifle in the form of a deed may ruin the cause of the righteous and helpless, and end in the triumph of the powerful oppressor. Yet, even then, the righteous is by far the most enviable; although he lose his earthly

substance, yet he remains rich in his integrity, and can rejoice under the approving eye of his heavenly Father. Whereas, the oppressor, who deprives the helpless one of his patrimony, *dare* not say, "My Father which art in Heaven," with any hopes of favourable audience,—since that Father has proclaimed himself the Protector of the widow and orphan, and the *avenger* of their wrongs. But anxious as I was about this suit (in which God dealt most gently with us), I have a far greater and more momentous cause to bring before heaven, a cause which makes all others appear insignificant—the cause of my costly, never dying soul!

There is a Chancery above, so pure, so righteous so easy of access, where ministering angels stand at the door-ways, and gently lead you in—and where no time, no numbers, no errors can injure or confuse its vast business. The petition I have to bring into it comprises the long list of all my sins, wanting forgiveness and cleansing away all grievances, even to the minutest, wanting redress; all my sorrows, even the most secret, wanting consolation. But besides a petition for redress, I am craving for gifts—free gifts out of the

inexhaustible stores of this heavenly Chancery, wealth laid up for those who need it. I am begging for the riches of Christ to help my deep poverty of soul; I am petitioning to be clothed in a costly garment of imputed righteousness; I am craving to be washed in the blood of God's well-beloved Son, the pure and spotless Lamb of atonement, since *nothing else* can cleanse my soul and give peace to my awakened conscience. And this petition being so vast, so important, so boundless in its demands, should I not approach the awful Chancery with fear, doubt, and trembling? Should I not feel utterly discouraged when I reflect on my unworthiness? Should not my heart fail me at the thought of the divine Judge?

No; I approach with confiding love. The golden sceptre is graciously extended to me the moment I enter, toiling along with my weighty burden; I press forward, invited by the benign aspect of that heavenly countenance, and led by the Holy Comforter; my heavy load falls at the foot of the Cross, and there is deposited my petition, even under the eye of love, and to be dealt with in infinite graciousness and wisdom. No hurry occurs here. I, a weak, humble, needy

creature, kneel at the footstool of Omnipotence. That ear which is never heavy, never closed, never inattentive, is bent towards me; and whilst I pour forth all my wants and troubles, the most soothing, strengthening promises are continually brought to me by the Holy Spirit, till, in the midst of my grievances, my soul is overpowered by gratitude, and the lips which came to pray remain to praise. No one can interrupt my quiet audience; no, not all the powers of darkness can separate me from that mercy-seat in that favoured hour. In that happy spot I am not only *allowed*, *but invited* to pass my whole life. Like Mary, I may sit at the feet of Jesus (in spirit) from hour to hour, from year to year, until He raises me from the Cross to the Crown, from prayer to endless praise!

And, oh, how infallible is my Advocate! He cannot be mistaken, for He is omniscient; He cannot be displeased at my importunity, because he has told me to "pray always," and "not faint;" He cannot plead for me in vain, because He is the "well-beloved Son" of His Father; He cannot forget me, because He has "graven *me* on the palms of His hands;" "He ever

liveth to make intercession for us;" the Father continually looks upon Him as a Lamb slain for us. Christ continually receives the prayers which His own Spirit has inspired, and until we are safe within those glorious mansions which He is preparing for us, those prayers will be accepted as often as we breathe them.

Having this free access, this blessed privilege of communion with Heaven, let us carefully watch against everything which may interfere with our happy, confiding intercourse in prayer. Any sinful feeling, however insidious and apparently trifling at first, will, if not strenuously opposed and banished, soon obscure the brightness of the heavenly presence, and destroy our joy in prayer.

Yesterday was a glorious day. Not a cloud had been visible in the pure, blue sky; scarcely a breath of air had stirred the branches; and the rippling of the river, and songs of birds, alone broke the stillness. Suddenly, as I looked out on the lovely scene, I observed a low, white fog, at some distance, on the face of the meadows, shrouding their verdure, whilst all above was still clear. By degrees the fog travelled on,

are then recited to us; and whilst we must be self-condemned as we listen, our hearts' desire in humble sincerity will be, that we may receive strength to live in the spirit of them, as there is a beauty in holiness which the renewed heart loves to contemplate. The perfect holiness of God is a bright, noble subject for meditation, which, though far removed from, we may still gaze on and adore.

The preached Word is a powerful means in the ordinances of God. The faithful minister enlarges on the inspired text; and taught and warmed by the Holy Spirit, he earnestly and affectionately addresses his hearers on subjects affecting their everlasting welfare. How many sinners have been arrested in their cold career of rebellion by the threatenings of the divine law! How many careless sleepers have been aroused by the recapitulation of God's certain, and often sudden, judgments! How many waverers between the world and Christ have been overcome by some gracious word of His own lips, and have clasped His *cross then and for ever!* How many poor despairing penitents have seen clearly for the first *time,* that the "blood of Christ cleanseth from

all sin!" How many young believers, trembling and doubting whether their weak faith could be *true* faith, have heard the signs of a *real* believer set forth, and with gushing tears of joy, have recognised these precious evidences in their own hearts! How many mourners have here learned to turn their eyes from the grave to glory! How many afflicted ones have here heard that their affliction is the blessed proof of their sonship and their Father's love! How many cheerless and uncared for in the world hear of a Friend who never fails, everlasting arms ready to support them, and a home in heaven of undying felicity! Yes, the preached word is a blessed and powerful means of gathering in souls to the glory of their Lord and Saviour.

Remember, my friend, how many happy hours you have passed in God's house, worshipping Him, praying to Him, and drinking in the instruction which fell from the lips of your faithful pastor. Let the recollection of past mercies, past help, chase from your soul all hard thoughts of your heavenly Father. How often have you walked home from church with your heart brimful of Sabbath joy, and holding sweet communion

our missionaries, and the blessing of God on them.

The Sabbath day is peculiarly suited for a visit to the sick-bed or house of mourning. Then it is that the invalid feels most his helpless condition; when all are gone to worship in the house of God, or to seek their own pleasure, *he* is left, weary and weak, to his own reflections; perhaps too ill or too ignorant to read, and too faint to bear much meditation. Then does the Christian visitor step in, like a ministering spirit, and impart to his afflicted brother some of the peace, love, and comfort, which fill his own heart. Some passage from the sermon, some text just suited to the invalid's state of mind—some encouragement to prayer—some gentle exhortation to patience, and lo! the sabbath joy surrounds even that sick-bed! He also leads the mourner to contemplate that precious lost one who, a few Sabbaths ago, was singing hymns of praise in the house of God, as now joining in the blessed hallelujahs of heaven, and enjoying a Sabbath that never dies. Then the bereaved heart ceases to dwell on the empty chair, and numerous me-

mentos of the beloved departed, and looks upon him in glory.

I have lately made it a rule,—and I derive great comfort from it,—to implore God's blessing on each particular act of my life every Sabbath morning—that He will bless everything I do, think, or say, from my uprising to my last waking thought, naming each particular; and it is very pleasant, in the Sabbath calm, to petition the Lord of the Sabbath, and to feel confident that He hears, for Christ's sake. And though this manifold blessing may not immediately appear, I strengthen myself with the reflection that God *cannot* disappoint the prayer of faith, and I repeat over to myself, "Though it tarry, wait for it."

If we have wandered from our heavenly Father for a season, if we have been, for a time, feeding on the husks of the world, and aliens from our Parent's house, what time so fitting to return home as the Sabbath day? And with what melting sorrow, humble penitence, and returning love can we then say, "I will arise, and go to my Father!" and in the services of the sanctuary, and hallowed quiet of the day, we have place and

thought, that you did not sufficiently appreciate and use them to *mutual* edification, when the souls you so valued and loved are gone to their eternal home.

Then comes the evening prayer. Your household, that little flock for whom Christ died, assemble around you, and, as you all kneel at the footstool of mercy, one voice, but, I trust, *every* heart, ascends in thanksgiving for the mercies of the past day, and an affectionate committal of yourselves to the care of your heavenly Guardian through the helpless hours of darkness; and if *any* sleep sweetly, surely *you* may hope to do so, with such Sabbath-calm in your heart, and under such divine blessing and protection, prepared—if it be God's will—to join the heavenly Sabbath at a moment's notice.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Things not Seen.

"The world recedes! it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes!—my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount—I fly!
O grave! where is thy victory?
O death! where is thy sting?"

POPE.